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COMPETITION PAGE 15
LETTERS PAGES 16-17
LEISURE PAGES 18-24
MOTORING PAGES 31-33
SPORT PAGES 38-39

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FACEBOOK SHARES DEBATE

A Facebook group set up calling the town's innovative shared space scheme 'an accident waiting to happen' has signed up close to 1,000 members within a month of launching.

The group on the popular social networking site has been set up to oppose the controversial traffic scheme and urges its members to post details of 'near misses' on the stretch of road which sees cars and pedestrians given equal priority.

■ BY ED HILL

ASHFORD Golf Club has confirmed it has held talks about possibly moving to a new home after its picturesque course was included on a list of sites facing potential redevelopment.

The 18-hole parkland course in Sandyhurst Lane is just one of a host of green spaces earmarked for future development as part of the council's development plans.

The Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan outlines areas which could be developed over the coming years as the town looks to accommodate the huge amount of housing government has insisted it build, in addition to further expansion of leisure and commerce facilities.

You can have your say on the remarkable map of the borough during a consultation period which runs for another month.

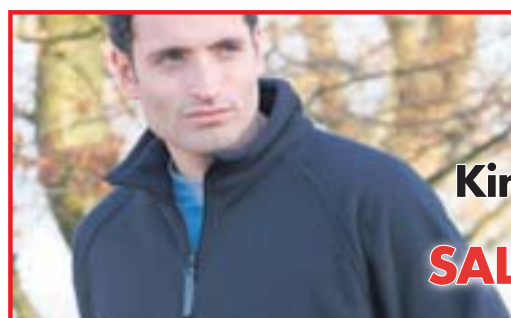
The list of sites includes areas already earmarked for future development such as the old railway works off Newtown Road. But the council has also named additional sites which could mean many of the town's green spaces could see development.

However, it stresses it is only identifying possible venues for development and not giving the green light yet.

Other sites include the golf club, the cricket and hockey club in Ball Lane and the rugby club off Canterbury Road.

John Gammon from Ashford Golf Club confirmed: "We were in discussion with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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3 Retailers, survive the credit crunch. See the community channel on yourkenttv.co.uk. Search 'Clarks'

SEE OUR SISTER PAPERS KENT ON SUNDAY AND THE SATURDAY EDITION FOR ALL THE WEEKEND'S COUNTY NEWS AND SPORT

EDITOR: Chris Britcher 01303 817171
GROUP EDITOR: Gary Wright 01303 817032
WEBSITE: www.yourashford.co.uk
TELEPHONE ADVERTISING: 01303 817110
FAX: (Advertising) 01303 817002

EMAIL: Editorial: yourashford@kosmedia.co.uk. Sales: advertising@kosmedia.co.uk
HEAD OFFICE ADDRESS: Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR
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County board give academy plans a boost

BY ED HILL

AMBITIOUS plans to create a new academy taking children from their first to last day of schooling have been given a huge boost by receiving a provisional thumbs up.

Much-discussed proposals to merge Christ Church secondary school with Linden Grove Primary School, near Stanhope, have now been given the support of Kent County Council's School Organisation Board.

The backing means the plans now become concrete – and could pave the way to a £30 million investment and an academy which would cater for more than 1,700 of the borough's children and could be open as soon as next year.

Academies were introduced in 2000 and see much of their funding come from outside sponsors and payment. By merging the management of both the primary and secondary aspects of a child's education – there would be one headteacher and one board of governors – it should mean a smooth transition through the various stages.

Crucially, Canterbury Christ Church University will sponsor and support the proposed academy as well as the county council – although it will be funded outside of Local Education Authority control.

At the same meeting, two other academies are also being proposed by merging schools in Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.

County councillor and member of the board Mark Fittock said: "We welcome these improvements in our schools. This huge investment in rebuilding schools will help boost Kent's economy at a difficult time and improve pupil choice and their long-term prospects."



Pictures: ED HILL



MERGER?: Linden Grove Primary School and Christ Church secondary school look to join

Peter Read, from Kent Independent Education Advice, said: "Academies attract a lot of funding and superb resources for children going through."

"Children would still be given an opportunity to take the Kent Test and could go to a grammar school."

"There are already nine academies educating children from three to 19, but they have not been in existence long enough to gauge how the scheme works in practice."

Linden Grove current admits just 60 children a year while Christ Church takes around 240. It is expected the majority of children will still join the academy at the age of 11.

A KCC spokesman said: "The next stage of the process will be a public consultation with parents at the school and from anyone in the local community. We will also soon announce the date of a public meeting that people will be able to attend."

'This is all part of the growth of Ashford'

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

council and a developer exploring the possibility of the club moving.

"However, it is not currently on the agenda."

The town is a targeted government growth area – and as such has to find sites suitable for 3,500 homes and providing 6,625 jobs in the area.

The council says the list of sites has come from various sources, including previous plans and informal submissions already made to the council.

It will alarm many, however, as to just how much green space could be developed.

In particular it could further erode the spaces between the town and its outlying villages – such as that already seen between the town and such areas as Kingsnorth and Kennington.

However, given the current downturn in commercial house building it seems unlikely many of these sites will see development anytime soon.

The consultation document also includes two major urban extensions at Chilmington Green and Cheeseman's Green.

Spokesman for Ashford council, Dean Spurrell, said: "These sites are pieces of land that have been suggested by landowners and developers."

"It may well be that after this consultation none of these areas are developed and new areas of land may be suggested."

Alternative

Alan Paterson from Ashford Hockey Club said: "The ground is now too small for us and we have access problems. Both clubs have outgrown the pavilions, so long term we are looking at finding an alternative."

"This is a long-term vision. This is all part of the growth of greater Ashford. As Ashford grows the providers of sporting facilities will have to grow with it."

"Any organisation that might want to double its members as the town grows will be forced to look for alternative sites."

The consultation period runs until February 13 and can be viewed and commented on at

www.ashford.gov.uk/consult. You can also see the plans at the Civic Centre in Tannery Lane, Charing and Wye libraries and the Tenterden Gateway or call 01233 330 229.

• **What do you think of the proposals? Are you confident or fearful of what the future will hold for the borough? Let us know. Email: yourashford@kosmedia.co.uk. Write: The Editor, Yourashford, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.**

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EXQUISITE JEWELLERY

Making a splash with free swimming plans?

Pilot scheme to test the water

■ BY ED HILL

A FREE swimming scheme is to be trialled at the borough's two major leisure centres.

But it is a far cry from the free swimming for teenagers and OAPs project proposed by the Government and rejected by Ashford council chiefs last year.

Instead it will offer carefully chosen groups the chance for a free dip at the Stour Centre or Tenterden Leisure Centre – among them young homeless people and the unemployed.

Last year, a Government-funded proposal to provide free swimming for the over-60s and under-16s was rejected by the council due to the costs involved.

The initiative was designed to roll out in the years leading up to the 2012 Olympic Games, highlighting the health benefits activities such as swimming can bring.

Now, however, the council has come up with its own, targeted, alternative with £80,000 of funding coming from the NHS Eastern and Coastal Primary Care Trust (PCT) which, if it agrees, would fund it over two years.

In the first year it will apply to older and dis-



Picture: PHIL HOUGHTON

MAKING WAVES: The Stour Centre and Tenterden Leisure Centre will be running the new free swimming schemes

abled people referred by social services, children and families registered with a children's centre, vulnerable families and young homeless people.

Even then, in year two, free off-peak swimming may not be available to the over-60s, who will be competing for spaces with unemployed people, looked-after children and junior schools not currently offering swimming.

Repercussions

The scheme will be run on a voucher system that will link each free swim with the amount of funding available.

Councillors say their scheme will be more beneficial to the targeted groups than the blanket free swimming scheme the Government

had proposed. It has also avoided any financial repercussions of the scheme which at present the PCT has no plans to continue funding after the two years is up.

Cllr Gerry Clarkson, portfolio holder for cultural services, said: "We hope the scheme will be successful enough to allow us to look at extending the offer to other groups in the community."

The council will review the success of the pilot scheme, which still has to be fully approved by the Ashford Leisure Trust and the PCT, after three months.

The council says it hopes to start the scheme in February or March.

• Email yourashford@kosmedia.co.uk

Outlet celebrates as sales increase

SALES and visitors to the Designer Outlet centre rocketed over Christmas – bucking the nationwide downward trend.

Centre chiefs say sales figures across the 80 stores increased by two per cent compared to the same period last year, while visitor numbers were up by three per cent.

As shoppers looked to nab a bargain, designer brands at the centre saw sales increase by an incredible 47 per cent. Luxury jewellery was also up a healthy six per cent on 2007 figures.

Centre manager David Maddison said: "The economic climate has encouraged people to make their money go a lot further and they know that is going to be easier here where everything is permanently discounted."

Both County Square and Park Mall have reported increased sales and higher footfall figures.

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How to handle the shared space scheme. Search 'shared'

Probe after girl attacked and robbed

MYSTERY surrounds an attack which left a teenage girl semi-conscious, sprawled on a path, and robbed of her mobile phone and money.

Now police are looking to piece together the moments leading up to the incident which took place around 10.45pm on January 5 in St Stephen's Walk, Stanhope – details of which were released yesterday.

The 18-year-old woman was found dazed by a passer-by three hours later, near a public phone box, who then summoned an ambulance.

Police believe the woman was followed by two men along Beaver Road towards the Murco Garage and shops. At some point between taking a short cut it is believed the men pounced, knocking her to the ground near St Anne's Park.

DS Bill Thornton said: "This is an unusual incident. I would particularly like to speak to the man who helped the woman and called the ambulance, but left before the ambulance arrived."

"He may have information that will help us piece together what took place. He can call South Kent police, or me personally on 01233 896282."

Council to employ 'design champion' for future buildings

THERE will never be another monstrosity such as Charter House acting as a blot on the landscape – after an initiative to improve the standard of buildings in the borough.

Council chiefs say they will appoint a 'design champion' to promote best practice in development as well as an independent design panel to advise on the quality of design.

The move comes in a bid to see off any criticism over the design and aesthetic appeal of new buildings and communities as part of the town's massive expansion plans.

Areas of the town centre particularly, are due for substantial new building with the development of what is described as a new leisure quarter in the area near the new Elwick Square.

The Thames Gateway, another area of Kent set for major redevelopment, employed well-known fashion designer Wayne Hemingway to help promote the quality of design in its building projects.

Councillor John Kemp, portfolio

holder for planning and development, said: "The continued focus on design quality is essential if we are to see a growing town that creates a legacy of places and communities that people enjoy and are proud of."

On the appointment of a design champion, Oliver Wincone, chairman of Ashford Visual Artists, said: "The key to the success of this will be finding someone with a good track record. It is good that Ashford may be able to attract someone like this, but people who are successful in this field are not short of work."

Ashford already has a good record when it comes to design and has been awarded Beacon status for promoting sustainable communities.

It has been employing design workshops on sites of varying sizes since 2000. The council also proposes more community and stakeholder design workshops, additional design training for councillors and staff, best practice workshops and visits to see and learn from completed developments.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

High Street church is targeted by lead thieves

LEAD thieves have struck at the All Saints Church in Biddenden High Street to extinguish new year good cheer.

At some point between January 2 and 5, five lengths of lead measuring around 6ft, and with an estimated value of around £500, were stolen.

Police would like to speak to anyone who may have seen anything during the time frame of the incident to call them on 01303 289180 or Crimestoppers on 09800 555111.

Pervert exposed himself to young girl in street

A FLASHER who exposed himself to a girl in South Ashford is being hunted by police.

The pervert exposed himself to the 11-year-old as she made her way home from school on January 6 at 4.20pm. She had just left a friend at shops in Christchurch Road. The man flashed at the junction with William Road.

He is described as 5ft 6in tall, aged about 30, with a skinny build and had dark blond or light brown hair.

Planners set to decide on care home proposal

PLANS to build a 54-bed care home in High Halden are in doubt if councillors go with the recommendation of the planning officer.

They are due to discuss the proposal – for land behind High Halden House on the A28 – at a planning committee meeting tonight.

Plans for the four-storey building were originally withdrawn by the applicant after concerns about its design. However, despite changes the planning officer says its scale would be out of keeping with the area.

Mobility scooters take up residence in centre

THE new Shopmobility centre has officially opened in County Square – a month after a display of scooters heralded its arrival.

The charity, which was formerly based in a Portacabin in the Vicarage Lane car park, is now on Blue Level 01 of the shopping centre. The charity offers mobility scooters and wheelchairs at reasonable rates, to assist visitors and shoppers in getting around town. Call manager Brian Marsh on 01233 650063 for details or to make a booking.

Latest bite of uncertainty for post office

■ BY ED HILL

CONFUSION surrounds the future of a post office in Kennington, amid claims it could be transformed into an NHS dentist's surgery.

Post Office chiefs insist there are no plans to bring down the shutters on the counter of the branch, which sits on the corner of Faversham Road and Upper Vicarage Road.

But an application is making its way through the planning process which suggests changing the use of the building.

It is just the latest twist for the site which has been plagued by uncertainty over the last 12 months.

Kennington councillor John Kemp said: "I have been inundated by people complaining about this.

"We have had a great deal of trouble finding a new postmaster. This is the only post office in the area and serves many people.

"Residents are strongly against this and turning it into a dentist would create many parking problems."

Last year it came in for fierce criticism from

residents for a 'shambolic' service. It then shut for nearly four months, opening again last month.

But just before Christmas mystery surrounded its future again when a 'for sale' sign went up on the building.

Despite many agreeing a dentist would be a useful addition to the area, older residents in particular have been left fuming over the potential loss of a vital service.

A planning application has been submitted to Ashford council to change the building's use from retail to a dental surgery by Sittingbourne-based Chopra & Associates Dental Practice.

When contacted by Yourashford it refused to elaborate on the situation, but hinted it was one of just a number of sites being examined in the town.

The confusion has sparked much debate in the area, however, with opinion split. Pat Boorman is from residents' group the Kennington Forum.

She said: "We do need more dentists, which



UNCERTAINTY: Following a year of twists and turns, Kennington post office is now the subject of a planning application to become a dental surgery

would be good for Kennington but many would be sad to lose the post office counter."

There will also be a likely stampede for the much sought after NHS places at any new surgery. Dentists have progressively turned their back on NHS-funded treatment due to the lack of financial reward they receive.

A Post Office spokesman, however, suggested things were far from certain. They said: "It is business as usual at this branch and there are no current plans to close it."

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Council driven to consultation

A MAJOR consultation into problem parking in the borough has been launched by the council.

The two documents focus on the Orbital Park at Sevington and traffic problems around Homewood School at Tenterden.

The Orbital Park has been plagued by parking issues, particularly the problem of foreign lorry drivers parking in the area affecting access to businesses and creating anti-social problems for residents. (See example of the problems on our free, broadband TV site www.yourkenttv.co.uk. Search 'Orbital'.)

A similar process is being carried out in Tenterden and St Michaels to improve road safety

around the town and deal with traffic problems caused at Homewood.

Paul Jackson head of environmental services at Ashford council said: "These proposals aim to address issues of safety and congestion... creating a safer environment for motorists and pedestrians as well as easing issues around parking."

Plans of the affected areas can be seen at www.ashford.gov.uk/parkingconsultation or by visiting the Civic Centre in Ashford. The plans for Tenterden can also be obtained at the Tenterden Gateway centre in Manor Row.

Comments must be received in writing, by post or email, by January 23.

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STAMINA: Runners Alison Draper, Steve Hickman and Nina Davies took part in the Isle of Wight Fell Running Race, one of many events the Ashford & District Road Running Club runs in throughout the year

Sign up for 10k race as club hits 20th birthday

ORGANISERS of one of the highlights of the town's sporting calendar are hoping for a bumper turnout to help mark its anniversary year.

The Ashford & District Road Running Club holds its annual 10K race on Sunday, February 8 and is hoping to boast a maximum field of 600 runners.

And this year's event will have special significance as it marks the club's 20th birthday.

Previously known as the Techpro 10k, the Ashford & District 10k gets under way at the club's headquarters at the Sandiacres Sports and Social Centre in Sandhurst Lane.

Ladies captain Alison Draper will be among those lining up to take part and is urging runners across the borough to join in.

She said: "The Ashford & District 10k is a great race, a great day out, and great fun."

"This year will be particularly special because it is our 20th anniversary. It's not too far and the satisfaction at completing it is immense – whether that's at the front or the back of the field."

It was in April 1988 the running club first opened for business – designed to cater for

■ BY CHRIS BRITCHER

the needs of adult runners of all abilities who enjoyed road running. Starting with 40 members, it now has a steady 60 members renewing membership each year.

Mrs Draper, from Singleton, added: "Our ability range, for both male and female, goes from beginners, event novices, through to race and age category winners."

"We participate in road races of all distances, from five miles to the marathon."

"We travel to events across most of southern England as well as such events as the Great North Run. Individual members venture further afield and run in other counties whilst a regular visit, by a large group of members, is paid to the Majorca Marathon and half marathon."

"So whatever your ability or age – our oldest member is nearly 80 – people should feel they can come along and enjoy a fun and healthy activity."

Entry for this year's race costs £10 if you are an existing member of a running club – £12 if not. All entries for the February 8 race must be made in advance.

• The closing date for entries is February 4. To enter or find out more see www.ashford-runners.co.uk.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Jail for ATM ram raiders

FOUR men have been sentenced to a total of 17 years for the theft or attempted theft of 17 cash machines and 10 vehicles across the country, including one in Tenterden.

George Welford, from Hoo in Rochester, was sentenced to five years and banned from driving for the same period at Ipswich Crown Court on Thursday. The 40-year-old construction worker along with Stewart Bentley, Paul Mockford and Martin Goodwin had pleaded guilty to the crimes carried out between May 2007 and July 2008. Among the raids was one in Ashford Road, St Michaels, which saw £18,000 taken and £10,000 of damage caused. It took place on March 21 last year.

Detective Sergeant Rob Haines from Kent Police's serious and organised crime unit, which led the investigation, said: "We have established the full extent of damage, chaos and disregard all four men have had in order to satisfy their own relentless greed."

Outlet music store closes

ZAVVI is to shut its store at the Designer Outlet with the loss of eight jobs.

The store is one of three Kent branches of the stricken music, film and game retailer being closed by administrators.

The company's troubles are a consequence of the end of Woolworths, as its distribution arm supplied much of Zavvi's stock.

Nineteen other stores are being closed around the country while other branches in Kent, including Canterbury and Bluewater, will continue to trade if a buyer can be found.

The chain was originally Virgin Megastore.

Hospital gets an upgrade

BENENDEN Hospital is undergoing a £2 million refurbishment programme.

The hospital, run by the Benenden Healthcare Society, treats private and NHS patients. One ward is being converted into 13 large single rooms and work upgrading one of the operating theatres is also under way.

The operating theatre should be completed by the end of February and the single rooms are scheduled to be completed by April.

Jane Abbott, acting hospital director said: "The improvements are a considerable investment and will make patients' stay extremely comfortable."

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OUR free broadband TV site www.yourkenttv.co.uk is looking for historic sites or stories in and around the borough to focus on for future films.

Fronted by former BBC Radio Kent star Julie Maddocks, the first batch of films from across the county are already proving a big hit.

Recent films include a two-part look at the history of Ashford's cattle market. To view it search 'cattle' at www.yourkenttv.co.uk.

If you have an idea you would like to see featured, email yourashford@kosmedia.co.uk.

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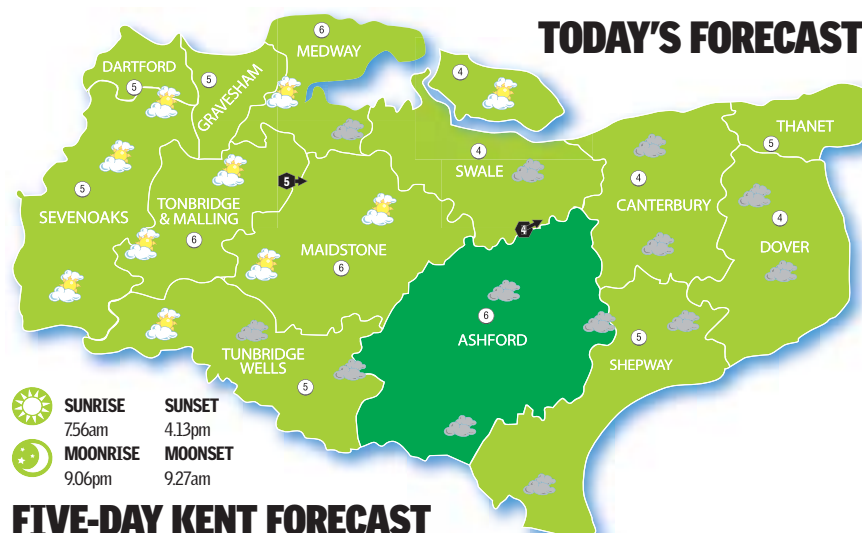
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	Sunday	6:05pm	5.3m
Dover	Saturday	3:28pm	6.0m
	Sunday	4:20pm	5.7m
Dungeness	Saturday	3:28pm	6.8m
	Sunday	4:21pm	6.4m
Ramsgate	Saturday	3:58pm	4.5m
	Sunday	4:50pm	4.3m
Sheerness	Saturday	5:06pm	5.4m
	Sunday	5:54pm	5.1m
Whitstable	Saturday	5:12pm	4.9m
	Sunday	5:55pm	4.7m



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	5°C	Madrid	2°C
Athens	9°C	New York	-2°C
Barcelona	9°C	Paris	3°C
Beijing	-2°C	Rome	10°C
Bombay	33°C	Sydney	23°C
Cape Town	27°C	Tenerife	18°C
Cardiff	9°C	Tokyo	7°C
Gibraltar	14°C	Vancouver	5°C
Hong Kong	19°C	Warsaw	-1°C
Las Palmas	17°C	Wellington	18°C

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	10°C	4°C	4°C	7°C	9°C	Gravesend	10°C	5°C	6°C	8°C	10°C
Canterbury	9°C	3°C	3°C	6°C	7°C	Maidstone	10°C	4°C	5°C	8°C	9°C
Chatham	10°C	5°C	5°C	7°C	9°C	Ramsgate	9°C	3°C	3°C	6°C	7°C
Dartford	10°C	5°C	6°C	8°C	10°C	Rochester	10°C	5°C	5°C	7°C	9°C
Dover	8°C	4°C	3°C	6°C	7°C	Sevenoaks	9°C	3°C	4°C	6°C	8°C
Faversham	10°C	5°C	5°C	7°C	9°C	Sittingbourne	10°C	5°C	5°C	7°C	9°C
Folkestone	8°C	4°C	3°C	6°C	7°C	Tonbridge	10°C	6°C	5°C	7°C	9°C
Gillingham	10°C	5°C	5°C	7°C	9°C	Tun Wells	10°C	6°C	5°C	7°C	9°C

yourashford NEWS IN BRIEF

Health trust backs scheme to get us walking to fitness

LOOKING to shed those festive pounds? Then a series of Health Walks backed by the NHS could be just the thing you're looking for.

Supported by the Eastern and Coastal NHS Trust, the events are organised for those looking to be more active, cost nothing, and don't need to be booked in advance.

Led by a volunteer, they last between 40-90 minutes and are mostly suitable for all.

For more information on the Health Walks schemes and details of all the walks and where and when they take place, visit www.whi.org.uk/eastkent.

Charity ultimate winner at Eastwell Manor prize draw

A PRIZE draw at Eastwell Manor has managed to raise £4,000 for local charities.

Top prize was a two-day stay at the award winning luxury hotel.

It was won by mother and daughter Joan and Audrey McDonald from Wigmore.

The draw was organised by the Kent Charities Group.

The winners received the prize from Turlou Parrett, chairman of Eastwell Manor, and Liz Clayton from the deaf support group Hi Kent, one of the charities that will benefit from the money.

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QUESTION & ANSWER

MALISSA WHITEHOUSE



Q How did you get your first break in music?

A I began singing and acting from the age of ten. I first performed at the Bob Hope Theatre, London. After six years of studying drama with an emphasis on music I decided to write my own material and fronted a teen indie group which led to key tours and gigs around the UK. Wider recognition came when I went solo and my song Summertime made it to the finals for song of the year in a competition supported by the Evening Standard, Coca-Cola and Capital Radio.

This gave me a platform to perform at Party in the Park and launch a singing career. Over time this led to a development deal with Peer Publishing working with top line songwriters to develop as an artist and songwriter.

Q What has been your luckiest break?

A I've worked at a variety of media companies such as MTV and Capital Radio. This led to a job working with the influential music executive Richard Park, a priceless opportunity as it allowed me to work on projects for key artists and taught me the skills needed to launch my production company.

Q Can you tell us about how Pop Sessions began and what it hopes to achieve?

A I always dreamed of setting up my own production company. Pop Sessions was launched

over five years ago when my business partner/producer Tony Matthew and I discovered there was a big gap in the business to offer up-and-coming artists a chance to record in a state-of-the-art studio with named producers. This was only possible for artists with a record deal but now anyone who dreams of being an artist can have the chance. The demand has been high and we have put some great new artists on the road to launching music careers.

Q Why did you decide to locate to Ashford?

A We already have London studios and knew Kent had some great bands and artists. As Ashford was a new growth area we thought it would be a perfect location.

Q Does the industry have a clear career path, or in the days of YouTube has it become a case that anyone can do it?

A The record industry is evolving all the time and with different trends in music technology everyone can have their five minutes of fame recording a bedroom smash hit.

However, the industry is fierce so you have to know your market and win your audience. With YouTube and MySpace you now have the power to reach your audience at a click of a button.

Q What sort of areas are open to people who want to get into music?

A Pop Sessions has been set up for that very reason; to give people a taster of the business

with the various sessions we run at our studio. Our team are on hand to give advice and direction on all areas of music from becoming a musician, producer or writer. We also offer instrument tuition as well as songwriting lessons.

Q Do you think Ashford has a good music scene?

A Absolutely! There are some great acts just launching. Make sure you keep your eyes peeled for Danny Taylor and Chantelle Curling.

Q If you were not involved in music what other path might you have chosen?

A If I wasn't involved in music I would still need to be in a creative job. I spent some time working with OK! magazine when I was younger and journalism was a favourite.

Q How can you help an aspiring new band or artist?

A We have just launched Diverse Music, offering management and support for new artists. This has given us the opportunity to bring two of our studios to Kent. Studio One is a writing suite for solo artists and Studio Two caters for live bands, and there is something for every budget. So if you want to book a session to do some covers or are looking to record your first album we can help.

• For more information call the team on 01233 811811 or email info@popsessions.co.uk

Q & A

The creative director of the increasingly popular Pop Sessions at studios in Bilting, talks to **Ed Hill** about the project, her career, and the talent they are helping to develop in the music industry

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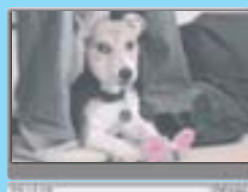
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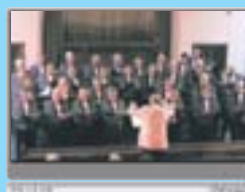




Dog behaviourist Pippa Ducat on puppy training. Search 'puppy'



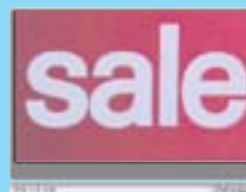
Take a step back in time at the Walpole Bay Hotel, Margate. Search 'Walpole'



Kent Police Male Voice Choir's fun version of an old song. Search 'choir'



A replica of the ship Discovery commemorates Kent's links with Virginia. Search 'Discovery'



Surviving the crunch: January sales at a Maidstone furniture retailer. Search 'Clarks'

EDITOR'S CHOICE

You can view all these videos and others from around the county with the click of a mouse at...

yourkenttv.co.uk

Our Morris dancers: are they on their last legs?

■ BY CHRIS MURPHY

THE distinctly British custom of Morris dancing will die out within two decades because no one is taking it up any more, its modern-day custodians are warning.

Youngsters say it is simply too embarrassing to be seen Morris dancing, a style of folk dance that dates back centuries.

The exact origins are clouded in mystery, but the clattering together of tiny sticks by men bouncing back and forth to odd music has delighted people across the country and baffled tourists in equal amounts.

The Morris Ring, an association for the bell-clad men, says fewer are taking it up and the average age of those taking part continues to rise, which means that in 20 years it will have died out completely from the current estimate of 14,000 dancers nationally.

Charlie Corcoran, the Ring's bagman, said: "It worries me a great deal. Young people are just too embarrassed to take part.

"This is a serious situation. Once we have



TRADITION: Are youth of today too hip for Morris dancing?

lost this part of our culture, it will be almost impossible to revive it."

But however odd and comical it looks, those who do Morris dancing also raise plenty of cash for charity. Some £600 was raised for the Demelza House children's hospice before Christmas, following several displays around east Kent by the Woodchurch Morris Men.

And one man in the county is determined to keep the hanky-waving habit alive.

Malcolm Triggs, 50, said of the idea that Morris dancing was on its last legs: "That is actually nonsense. We have plenty of youngsters doing the dancing and playing."

His own three sons, Jack, 16, Harry, 11, and Will, nine, are all members of Whitstable's Dead Horse Morris.

Mr Triggs, who runs a public relations company in Ashford, said: "At Dead Horse we have five or six children dancing with us."

Mr Triggs, who is also the Squire of East Kent Morris Men, said: "Clearly, young children who then become teenagers don't want to dance in their local shopping centres because they might be seen by their mates.

"But they tend to come back in later years when they are not as bothered about what people think about them.

"I think the whole Morris dancing world is alive and well and will keep going forever. More sides [groups] are springing up all the time.

"I believe it is all perfectly healthy and won't be dying out any time soon."

• For more information on dancing with either side, phone Mr Triggs on 07970 968314.

New chief aiming to guide estate agents through hard times

HOUSING expert Peter Rodd is the man who will help estate agents through the next couple of tough years.

He has told how he plans to put 30 years of knowledge to good use by fighting in the corner of property solicitors throughout the country.

He is partner and head of conveyancing at Thanet firm Boys & Maughan and also a member of the Law Society's property section, and was this week named its new chairman.

In his new role, Mr Rodd, 55, will head a team providing advice to other solicitors on property issues such as the slump in the housing market, Home Information Packs and money-laundering.



EXPERIENCED: Peter Rodd

He said: "I've been a member of the committee for a few years and was deputy chairman before this, but it's certainly a challenging time to step up because the housing market is going through some tough times at the moment."

Mr Rodd joined Boys & Maughan – which has offices in Margate, Birchington, Ramsgate and Broadstairs – in 1976.

He was admitted as a solicitor in 1978 and became a partner of the firm in 1981.

Health trust chiefs taken to task over cost of agency staff

HOSPITAL bosses have tried to explain payments of up to £110 an HOUR for stand-in staff.

This week it was claimed that the NHS was wasting vast amounts of money paying soaring hourly rates to agency staff.

The Conservative Party has revealed that the NHS spent almost £800 million on agency workers in 2006-07.

At least three Kent trusts were revealed as paying at least £100 an hour for stand-in staff –

equivalent to an annual salary of more than £200,000.

But the cash does not all go to the worker – agencies skim up to 43 per cent of the payments.

The NHS West Kent Trust's new chairman, Anthony Jones, said: "We would like to reduce our reliance on agencies and we are trying very hard to recruit more permanent staff."

According to Department of Health figures, a consultant earns between £61,000 and

£174,000 a year, while a salaried GP makes between £52,000 and £79,000.

Medway NHS Foundation Trust had paid £98 an hour to a consultant.

A spokeswoman said: "Patient care is our top priority and we would be failing in our duty under these circumstances if we did not use agency staff."

Margaret Daly, NHS West Kent's director of human resources, said staff turnover was low but added: "We are constantly competing

against London wage... sometimes we have to turn to agencies to fill vacancies on a short-term basis."

Andrew Lansley, the shadow health secretary, said: "It's incredible that agency staff can be paid such high hourly rates when jobs are being cut at the same time."

The Department of Health argued it had reduced the amount spent on agency staff from 5.5 per cent of its pay budget in 2004 to 3.2 per cent last year.



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Brace yourselves for the county's next Big Day Out

■ BY NICK AMES

LAST year it proved one of the most popular ticket giveaways the county had ever seen... and now it is to take place again.

The Kent Big Day 2009 will be staged on Saturday, March 28, and see thousands of free tickets to the county's top tourist attractions handed out free to the county's residents.

Now in its third year, organisers Visit Kent, at Kent County Council, last year worked with 130 of the county's many attractions – including castles, historic houses and gardens, steam trains and sports centres to hand out more than 16,000 Big Day Out free tickets to people living in Kent and Medway.

And this year the celebration of the county's tourism and hospitality sector, and the contribution it makes to the local economy, will be even bigger. More cultural and sporting venues will join the ranks of destinations opening their doors to Kent Big Day Out ticket-holders.

Details of exactly where you can go for free have yet to be unveiled, but the free tickets will be available from the Visit Kent website, at www.visitkent.co.uk, and through the county's visitor information centres from March 3.

Last year the Visit Kent website had 16,483 hits on the tickets' launch day – a record number for one day.

Fran Warrington, head of Visit Kent, said: "The feedback we had from attractions and visitors for our 2008 Kent Big Day Out event was excellent. Ninety-three per cent of visitors said they would recommend the attraction they had explored."

"More than 30 per cent of visitors to Kent stay with friends and relatives and rely on their hosts for recommendations of what to do



LET'S EXPLORE: Dover Castle is just one of the attractions to which you could have got free tickets last year

while in the county. So this is encouraging."

KCC cabinet member Kevin Lynes, who has special responsibility for tourism and regeneration, said: "The Kent Big Day Out goes from strength to strength. This event highlights that on our doorstep we have amazing destinations, beautiful gardens and countryside, as well as activity-based attractions for those who like their days out with added adrenaline."

"Kent Big Day Out is good for the local economy, which relies so much on tourism, and it's good for local pride. Last year 98 per cent of Kent Big Day Out visitors said it made them proud to live in our county."

Visit Kent research shows that Kent attracts 45 million visitors every year, producing an economic impact of £2.5 billion and supporting more than 50,000 jobs across the county.

Volunteers who rose to challenge

ST JOHN AMBULANCE volunteers from across the county have been praised after a hectic month that almost overwhelmed the vital support service.

St John Ambulance Kent chiefs praised "dedicated and hard-working volunteers for their professionalism" for efforts in December.

They faced the double-whammy of plunging temperatures and a spate of flu cases, adding strain to regular medical teams and increasing the demand for their help.

December saw its various divisions cover 90 shifts, clocking up a staggering 900 hours of volunteering.

This is in marked contrast to the 2007 figures for December, when 600 hours were completed.

New Year's Eve saw seven ambulances deployed across the county and more than 80 hours were logged throughout the course of the evening, with 54 calls attended.

More than 9,860 miles were travelled by ambulances and volunteers, with 1,139 of those miles driven on New Year's Eve alone.

Steve Walker, operations manager for St John Ambulance Kent, said: "This year has got off to a very busy start for all our members."

"Throughout December the team worked without question and dedicated large amounts of time to supporting the local ambulance service."

Birds feel the freeze

FOR the first time in more than a decade, wildlife groups last week called on countryside users to minimise disturbance to birds during the harsh weather.

The prolonged freezing conditions meant that many birds would have struggled to survive – and some of those that did could still be in a weakened state.

Dr Mark Avery, the RSPB's conservation director, said: "During freezing conditions, disturbance forces the birds to squander their precious energy reserves by taking flight when they need to spend as much time as possible feeding."

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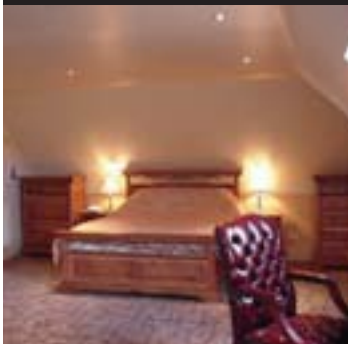
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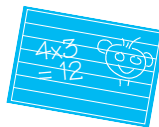
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HANDS UP: Application forms for entry this September into primary school must be submitted by Friday's deadline

Have a hand in deciding where your child goes

TIME is running out for parents of children taking crucial steps in their early education.

Application forms for entry this September into primary school – or for transfer to junior school – have to be submitted by this Friday, January 16.

Failure to do so will mean you potentially lose the choice of school your child will attend.

Applications for admission to primary schools and reception classes apply to children born between September 1, 2004 and August 31, 2005.

Applications for children currently in Year 2 – born between September 1, 2001 and August 31, 2002 – will also need to be submitted for entry into junior school.

Parents have had since November 17 to make their decision as to where they would like their child to attend and can do so in one of two ways.

Either they can complete the forms available from all local primary schools and junior schools and submit them to any of those schools or go online and complete the form there. Details of the web address is below.

All parents have to fill out the Reception Common Application Form (RCAF) for infant schools and a Junior Common Application Form (JCAF) for junior schools. They are asked to choose three schools in order of preference.

■ BY ED HILL

Entries received after the 11.59pm deadline on the night of January 16 will be marked late by the Local Education Authority and not given the same priority as those received on time.

Kent County Council, which is responsible for school admissions, advises parents to get hold of the Admissions to Primary School Booklet for their area so they can express a choice. If they don't, the child will only be offered a space at the school closest to the parents' home address.

Schools have been on a charm offensive since November in a bid to secure pupils – while parents have been sifting through prospectuses, attending open evenings and checking the latest Ofsted reports, again all available to view online, to help their decision making process.

Last year more than 96 per cent of children were placed in the state schools chosen by their parents.

Offers of a place will be sent to parents on March 31. Parents and carers then have until April 24 to accept the offer, be placed on a waiting list or appeal against the decision.

For more information go to www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning.

To make an application online go to – www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-sixth-form/school-admissions/e-admissions.htm.

BREAK TIME

Primary rises to Ofsted challenge

STAFF and governors at Charing Church of England Primary School recently held a development day to discuss its future.

The meeting was part of an ongoing process to improve the school following a damaging Ofsted report last term.

The school received an overall inadequate rating by the government's team of inspectors and was given a notice to improve.

A key area raised in the inspector's report that needed improvement, was matching pupils' learning with their ability. School staff were criticised for not stretching children enough when it came to learning and said there was too much repetition in lessons.

It now has an advisory headteacher,

Lynn Lawrence, who will be at the school until a new permanent head is appointed.

In a newsletter to parents Mrs Lawrence said: "I am pleased with the enormous progress that has been made against the three key areas for development identified by Ofsted in September."

Kitchen staff cook up five star rating

KITCHEN staff at Aldington Primary School have been awarded a five star rating by Ashford council's environmental health officers.

Headteacher at the school Sandra MacCourt said: "I am very pleased we were rated with the highest mark possible. Our thanks and congratulations go to Mandy Fletcher and Amy Godden, our kitchen team."



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yourashfordblogger

Each week we get a mystery writer to air their views on living in the district of Ashford...

Whatever happened to a little positive thinking in our town?

IT has often been said Ashford is the regional capital of apathy. And, in truth, those who say such things, may have a point.

I use as a fine example, the quote provided in your newspaper last week by Ashford council on the subject of a pantomime being staged in a big top. Now, and you'll have to forgive me for suggesting this, but it appeared the story was based more on an idea from the newspaper, rather than any call from 'people on the street'.

Yet it was a nice idea and one worth discussing. After all, if there is one thing Ashford has developed a reputation for, it is as something of a cultural desert.

But I digress. For those who missed the story, it was basically suggesting Ashford could do a lot worse than consider following Canterbury's lead and host a pantomime in a 'circus-style' big top.

The story suggested it would attract shoppers and provide a theatre space – albeit temporarily – in a town bereft of such a thing. So what did our council have to say on the matter? What words of encouragement and good cheer did they think to add?

Surely, you would think, they would make the sort of noises which would endear them to the public. The chances of it happening are a long shot so anything they said would hardly come back to hang them. They'd say something like "what a great idea. If a company came to us with a proposal we'd love to hear it". They could even add, for safety's sake, "we couldn't afford to spend taxpayers' money on it, but if a private company wanted to have a go, we'd be happy to assist". Makes sense, I'm sure you'd agree?

But, oh no. The quote our cheerful 'spokesperson' came up with was this miserable gem "As we do not have a theatre at present we are not obligated to continue to run productions in the same way as the Marlowe. If a professional company was keen to do a production we would have to negotiate whether that would be possible". Rubbish.

Aside from specialising in the bleeding obvious – we know we don't have a theatre – the quote suggests even someone willing to make all the effort would face a rough ride, like it might be a bit too much work for those in the Civic Centre being paid with our money.

And this is from our council. The people who are supposed to sing the praises of our town. To make everyone in the borough feel pleased to live here; enjoy living here.

Yet, for a council which has specialised in the past on selling the borough on what tomorrow might bring, it fails miserably to inject that future with life and fun... just houses, houses, houses and the occasional shop. Well, Ashford council, that is not enough.

Little wonder there is such apathy in this town – when our own council are so gloomy. If it wasn't now a little out of season, 'bah humbug!' would suit their attitude perfectly.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

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If there is a story in your area you think we should be covering contact the editor, **Chris Britcher**, on 01303 817171 or email him on the details above. If you want to be the next Ashford blogger then all you have to do is submit an article to us (of around 550 words) and email it to the editor. And don't forget, for all the latest news and video from your town log-on to www.yourashford.co.uk.

Write to The Editor, YourAshford, KoS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

* We cannot guarantee all articles will be published and all are at the editor's discretion

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WIN Girlie fun with Bride Wars

TO celebrate the release of Bride Wars on January 9, we're offering five readers the chance to win a Bride Wars Goodie Pack.

Liv (Kate Hudson) and Emma (Anne Hathaway) are best friends who since childhood have planned every detail of their respective weddings.

At the top of their bridal "must have" list: a ceremony at New York's ultimate bridal destination, the Plaza Hotel.

Now, at age 26, they're both about to get married; they're about to realise their dreams; and they're about to live happily ever after. Or maybe not...

When a clerical error causes a clash in dates – they're now to be married on the same day – Liv, Emma and their lifelong friendship are put to the ultimate test. Liv, a success-

ful lawyer who is used to getting what she wants, including the perfect job and the perfect man, won't settle for anything less than the perfect wedding she has dreamed of for years.

Emma, a schoolteacher who has always been good at taking care of others, but not so much in looking after herself, discovers her inner Bridezilla and comes out swinging when her own dream wedding is imperiled.

Now, the two best friends who'd do anything for each other, find themselves in a no-holds-barred, take-no-prisoners struggle that threatens to erupt into all-out war.

We have teamed up with 20th Century Fox Films Co. Ltd to offer five lucky readers the chance to win the goodie pack which includes a set of Boxing Gloves, a mini mani/pedi set, a notebook and also a quizbook to test your friends.

To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your e-mail address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Bride Wars Comp, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SR. The closing date is January 30, 2009.

Question: When did Bride Wars hit the cinema screens?

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TALK TIME

VAIDAS CESNA

Owner of the Eastern European Food Shop in Norwood Gardens discusses the difficulties traders currently face.



How long has the shop been open?

About six months. I opened the shop because there are a lot of people from Eastern European countries such as Poland, Romania and Lithuania who are living in the area. Many of the foods from back in those countries cannot be found at the normal supermarkets.

How is the business doing at the moment?

Times are difficult. Prices for food in Eastern Europe have really gone up in recent times; more than over here, and by the time you add the transport costs this can make it much more expensive than when we first started. We have also had to deal with the work happening on the ring road, which has affected business, but now that is over we hope things will improve.

What are specialities do you sell?

We sell all sorts of different foods. We also have fresh produce such as special smoked meats, pastries and pies. We also sell dried fish such as dried salmon. We also sell newspapers and magazines from Eastern Europe. I hope to be able to sell drink such as vodka soon as well.

Do you have many English customers?

Yes, the meat and fish has proved very popular with our English customers. They like to come into the shop and try all the new things in the store.

What do you think of Ashford?

I lived in London for ten years before I moved here. I like Ashford very much as a town. It is a quiet place and the countryside around here is very nice.

YOUR LETTERS

Tent is a big top-ic for theatre lovers

Support grows for a temporary panto venue



Set the stage for a permanent theatre

A temporary theatre in Ashford would be wonderful, but we also feel the town needs a permanent one.

Ashford is a big town and is still growing and theatre would bring the community together.

It seems we are not thinking about the benefits of having a theatre. We are currently, and have been, taking our money out of Ashford to be able to go and see a show and the pantomimes. Some people cannot afford the travelling on top of the tickets for the show, so some families cannot benefit from this wonderful experience.

In this day and age everyone is trying to encourage families to do things together and this would be an ideal situation to do this.

So not only would we benefit by bringing money and people into Ashford – the families in Ashford would also greatly benefit.

This could also have a positive affect on other businesses in Ashford such as restaurants, shops etc.



COMMENT ONLINE TOO

Not only can you use email and letters to respond to our stories, don't forget you can comment via our website too.

Beneath most stories on the www.yourashford.co.uk website there is the facility to leave your comments on whatever YOU thought of the online article. To leave your remarks, simply click on the 'Add your comments' link and tell us what you think.

And remember, www.yourashford.co.uk is updated daily, bringing you the latest, breaking news from across Ashford and Tenterden as well as our villages. We will include the best on these pages too – ensuring your comments reach the widest possible audience. In addition, if you find your newsagent, supermarket or petrol station runs out of Yourashford before you've picked up your copy, you never need to miss out.

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The other people whom it would benefit would be Ashford's budding actors and actresses and local stage schools who could have the opportunity of showcasing their talents.

You definitely have our support.

Sandra and Dave Marsh
By email

Pantomime a good idea – oh yes it is!

What a good idea for a pantomime in the town.

I for one would love to see such a professional production and

believe it could really put Ashford on the map.

Nora Godden
Willesborough

Panto a way out of Marlowe's shadow

I do not believe I would be the only one who would love to see Ashford develop a reputation for a pantomime.

We are always living under Canterbury's shadow, and it would be a brilliant idea if we could rival them for once with a festive production of our own.

Bring on the big top, I say.

Michelle Garton
Kennington



Nuts and Bolts worthy of praise

Nice to see your paper highlighting the success of our town's football team so prominently.

The recent run of form has been extremely satisfying – and proves the club is capable of putting the town on the map.

Just such a shame the match at Whitstable was called off recently. I must admit when I

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turned up to watch the match it was mild and dry...so a little surprised the game was cancelled so early.

Would have been the perfect start to the New Year to have ousted the Oystermen!

G Smith
Challock

Shopping for answers

If some shops are outselling branches in Bluewater, as the woman from County Square claims, how come Ashford isn't thriving more?

Seems to me everyone is so keen to talk trade up positively, we seem to move from optimism to remarkable tales of success without a pause for breath or a reality check.

County Square is very nice now, but I fear it could fall victim to its own hype.

H Underwood
By email

On the path to safer roads

Ashford is steadily becoming more 'people-friendly'. And the good news has come from the interim director of Kent Highways, who says the pedestrian crossing from Little Burton Farm Lane across the Canterbury Road in Kennington, has been agreed.

Also, one in Bybrook Road, Towers School (work on the design is already in progress), plus five others in the Ashford district.

I was advised of this by KCC councillor, Liz Tweed.

We have been campaigning for years for more consideration to be given to the most vulnerable in our society, such as pedestrians and cyclists, in residential and rural communities. Perhaps we are seeing a change of attitude at last.

Ted Prangnell
Kennington

Adult learners inspiring

The deadline to nominate people for Adult Learners' Week Awards is approaching. These awards are a great way to celebrate the outstanding and inspirational achievements of adult learners.

You can nominate individuals, groups, families and projects who deserve recognition and inspire others to take up learning.

To apply, visit www.alw.org.uk/nominate to apply, email alw@niace.org.uk or phone 0116 204 4200. Nominations close 5pm, January 21.

The awards are the highlight of Adult Learners' Week, co-ordinated by NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) which is the UK's largest and longest running festival of learning (May 9-15, 2009).

Emma Cliffe
Assistant campaigns co-ordinator, NIACE

Rail against ticket hikes

Commuters face above inflation increases in rail fares this year.

Government policy is pushing rail fares up whilst the cost of running cars goes down. Government air pollution policy is so bad the European Environment Commissioner is taking the UK Government to the European Court of Justice to make it comply with European air pollution legislation.

As a railway season ticket holder, I am appalled by the recent above-inflation increases in rail fares. These will contribute to traffic congestion and noise and air pollution on our roads in Kent.

Government policy is failing to support the railways. The cost of rail fares rose 17 per cent above the rate of inflation 1997-2007.

However, motoring costs declined by eight

per cent in real terms 1997-2007. Now petrol prices have dropped, motoring costs will drop even further.

Since the Government has ignored agreed European air pollution legislation, between 12,000 and 24,000 people die of air pollution in the UK each year.

This has prompted the EU Environment Commissioner, Stavros Dimas, to take the

UK to the European Court of Justice.

The Government must cut its subsidy to private car use of about £13-14 billion a year and transfer these resources to the railways to keep fares down and add to new investment.

The Government should also cut its subsidy to civil aviation which is at least £9billion a year to boost investment in

railways. Kent's rails lines should all be electrified; the Medway Valley line and the Marshlink line (Ashford-Rye) need improving; some closed lines and stations should be reopened, eg the Western and Eastern Docks stations in Dover; the Whitstable to Folkestone line.

Dr Hazel Dawe
Kent Green Party



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THE ODD BUNCH: The Circus of Horrors, an outrageous travelling freak show, was originally set up as a 'rock'n'roll alternative circus'

Freak out

The outrageous Circus of Horrors is coming to town

THE CIRCUS OF HORRORS: APOCALYPSE IN THE ASYLUM

Thursday, January 22
Orchard Theatre, Dartford

RUNNING away with the circus will seem less appealing once you have witnessed the Apocalypse In The Asylum.

The latest production from outrageous travelling freak show The Circus of Horrors features pickled zombies, chainsaw-wielding vampires and plenty of hilarious horror.

It is certainly not for the faint-hearted as the show is a real shock to the senses with its assault of rock, mayhem and gory humour.

Apocalypse In The Asylum is described as "a show for weirdos, Goths, freaks and open-minded people who know how to have a good time, know how to laugh but, most importantly, know how to scream!" and is not recommended for those of a nervous disposition.

Audiences with strong stomachs have been enjoying the grotesque antics of The Circus of Horrors since the mid-90s as its blend of humour and horror drags the circus genre, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century.



Despite this modern approach, the show is set in Paris at the end of the 19th century.

With its stage full of burlesque dancers, incredible gymnasts and breathtaking acts, The Circus of Horrors has to be seen to be believed.

The show's beginnings stem from a chance encounter at a funeral in 1994, when the show's 'un-dead ringmaster' Dr Haze met famous circus man Gerry Cottle.

Haze had been born into a circus family and loved performing, but he also discovered a passion for music

and had written his first songs by the age of 16.

At 20 he left the circus to pursue a music career, joining a band called Flash Harry, which then changed its name a number of times over the years. The band moved from its base in Wales to London, performing regularly at The Embassy and supporting artists such as Depeche Mode.

Haze started using illusions, vampire girls and fire-eaters during the gigs, but this was not enough to quench his thirst for a big theatrical project. With his extensive experience, Haze felt sure Cottle was the man to help him realise his dream – to produce a "rock'n'roll alternative circus" that Haze could take to audiences around the country.

The Circus of Horrors premiered at the Glastonbury Festival in 1995 and was an immediate hit. By the end of that year, Haze was receiving offers to take the show abroad and the circus's early tours included trips to Germany and South America.

In London, it played at Camden's Roundhouse for 19 weeks, the longest a circus had stayed in one venue in the capital for more than 100 years. Since then, there has been no stopping this bizarre celebration of the weird and the wonderful.

The show, which is rated PG, starts at 7.45pm. Tickets are priced from £17 to £26 plus booking fee. Call the box office on 01322 220000, or book online at www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.



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THE BITTERSWEETS

Monday, January 19
Zebra Bar, Maidstone



TWO duos bring music from very different parts of America to a Maidstone audience next week.

The Bittersweets, based in Nashville, live up to their name with their captivating sound that blends hope and poignancy. Fusing sunshine and melancholy with evocative lyrics, wonderful melodies and alluring vocals, the duo capture life's ups and downs in their honest songs.

Chris Meyers and Hannah Prater both play guitar and sing, while Meyers also plays keyboards. Their skill at exploring both the highs and lows of life is evident in their 2006 full-length debut *The Life You Always Wanted*, their recent live set *Long Way From Home* and new album *Goodnight*, San Francisco.



Starting out as 'singing puppeteers' during their childhood, twin sisters Sarah and Claire Bowman are now popular performers on the New York City music scene.

As kids they recorded their first album on a tape

recorder. Now both sisters are recognised musicians and vocalists, putting their almost telepathic musical bond to good use.

The show starts at 8pm and tickets cost £12 in advance or £14 on the door. To book call 01622 744481.



THE STARS FROM THE COMMITMENTS

Saturday, January 31
Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone



EXPERIENCE the best of Irish soul with barnstorming band The Stars From The Commitments.

Featuring Dublin's finest mix of gritty soul and irresistible charm, the band is still selling out venues and travelling the world. They have played in Jerusalem on

the same bill as chart-topping US band the Black Eyed Peas and even performed for President George W Bush at the White House.

The line-up includes two original cast members from Alan Parker's 1991 hit film *The Commitments*, adapted from Roddy Doyle's novel about unemployed Dubliners who form a soul band. Kenneth McCluskey played Derek 'The Meatman' Scully and Dick Massey appeared as Billy 'The Animal' Mooney in the BAFTA-win-

ning movie, which made the fictional band a household name and introduced many people to rhythm and blues.

Stars From The Commitments was formed shortly after the film's release and has delighted audiences with its sizzling show, featuring favourite tracks such as *Mustang Sally*, *Try A Little Tenderness* and *In the Midnight Hour*.

The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £18/£16. To book call 0870 4000 890 or visit www.leascliffhall.co.uk.

AN EVENING WITH WILLARD WHITE

Wednesday, January 21
Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury



THE songs of Paul Robeson will be performed by the mesmerising Sir Willard White next week.

As well delving into Robeson's repertoire, he will also be exploring the life of the man who was a major figure in the fight for equality. Robeson raised awareness of human rights in the mid 20th century and his moving story is still relevant to today's world.

Born in Princeton, New Jersey, Robeson was the son of a former slave. He studied law and was also a gifted singer, actor and athlete. He went on to find fame as an actor, as well as being a civil rights activist.



Sir Willard will be accompanied by a group of outstanding musicians, led by Neal Thornton and including Guy Barker on trumpet.

They will be joined by the Pavão String Quartet as they play tailor-made arrangements of some of

Robeson's more popular songs.

The performance starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £24.50/£22.50.

To book call the box office on 01227 787787 or visit the website at www.marlowe-theatre.com.

ASHFORD LEISURE

Find your Equilibrium with rocking live music

ROCK covers band Equilibrium will be playing at a pub in Ashford this week.

The five-piece formed in 2005 with the intention of playing great music all over Kent.

Read their set list and hear some tracks at www.equilibrium-theband.com.

Catch them at the George Hotel in the High Street on Friday. For more details about the venue call 01233 625512.

Band are offering you a Fusion of great tunes

FOR an evening of soft and classic rock played live, go along to the next gig by Kent band Fusion.

The four-piece, female-fronted band caters for all tastes and puts its own mark on great songs. Hear demos and find out more at <http://fusion-band.co.uk>.

Fusion will be at the Hoodon on the Hill in Silverhill Road, Willesborough, on Friday. Call the pub on 01233 662226.

Star performance is a range of classic hits

FROM the Beatles to the Rolling Stones, Blackstar covers some of the greatest music artists ever.

As well as classic favourites, the pub and party band also plays hits by contemporary acts. More information is at www.freewebs.com/blackstarnews.

See them at the Flying Horse Inn in Boughton Corner, Boughton Aluph, at 9pm on Saturday, call 01233 620914.

Take up a new hobby and help a charity too

ANYONE looking for a new hobby should throw themselves out of a plane.

The stunt will be in the name of charity, as Breakthrough Breast Cancer is offering people the chance to raise money by taking part in a sponsored parachute jump when you raise £395. Participants who raise £550 or more will receive a holiday voucher. See www.breakthrough.org.uk/skydive or call 0207 0252426.

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ASHFORD SHOPPING

Support local traders to boost our economy

MAKE sure you support local traders during 2009 – and with so many special offers available at the moment, you're likely to be spoilt for choice.

Ashford and Tenterden – and all the surrounding villages – boast a host of independent shops in addition to the big name chain outlets to create something of a shoppers' paradise.

And remember, by shopping and buying locally, you help keep our local economy alive during these difficult times.

Trio open up a corner of socialising heaven

WINE bar and restaurant @Utopia has reopened at the weekend.

The venue at 39-41 Bank Street held a special event to mark its re-launch on Thursday. Invited guests enjoyed food, drink and live music.

Doors were then thrown open to all on Saturday as the chef started cooking up a treat. Steve Biggs, the original chef and director of the venue, now runs the site alongside James Halligan and Matthew Ball.

Flower club squares up for new public display

SHOPPERS popping into County Square later this month will be able to enjoy some floral delights while they snap up their bargains.

Ashford Flower Club will be presenting their floral displays at the popular, extended, shopping centre during the week of January 26.

The club is part of the National Association of Flower Arrangers, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this month.

Savings will help you compute the new year

NEEDING a bit of computer power to get your new year off to a flying start? Then why not check out the PC World sale?

The firm has slashed prices on laptops, office equipment, video games and accessories as part of its January stock clearance.

Laptops can now be snapped up for £250, top-selling video games are 40 per cent off, and you can even buy some software packages for less than 50p.

Offers are at www.pcworld.co.uk.

Paint by numbers for stunning film star eyes

FOR sultry film star eyes, check out the latest collection of eye shadows from L'Oréal Paris.

The cosmetics company has launched three ColorAppeal Trio Pro Star Secrets Crystals, each one named after a famous beauty.

The numbered shadows are applied in three stages to achieve the perfect look. Priced at £6.99, the products are available from Boots, Superdrug and major supermarkets.

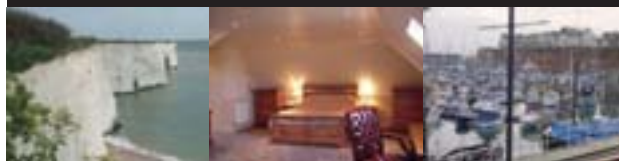
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YOUR TV REVIEW

■ BY TOM BETTS

RELOCATION, RELOCATION
Channel 4, 8pm, Tuesday
CELEBRITY BIG BROTHER
Channel 4, 9pm, week nights

THERE'S something addictive about horrible people looking at nice houses. As property prices tumble in light of the credit crunch it seems odd this genre of programming still booms.

It is rarely the houses are the stars of these shows, though – it's those searching for their dream homes.

With shows such as Relocation, Relocation – the spin-off of Location, Location, Location – it is the relationship of the couples that intrigues far more than the bricks and mortar.

More often than not it serves a reason for a maniacal woman to boss around the hen-pecked man in her life – a great showcase for remaining single if ever there were one.

I'd kill to be a fly on the wall when the cameras stop rolling as at some point the pair must surely realise that, for 250K, they perhaps won't be picking up the modern equivalent of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater.

But it is not just the strained house-hunters' relationships that crackle in the glow of the limelight.

The back-and-forth between hosts Kirsty Allsopp and Phil Spencer nips along nicely, leading some to believe they are in fact an item.

As a point of clarification, they're not, but if someone could bottle the sexual tension between this pair then they could well solve the energy crisis.

After Relocation, Relocation has ended and Boredom Boredom has set in, Big Brother is back, in super-duper celebrity form... again.

Despite the controversy which saw it shelved last year, CBB is still hanging in there, racking up the ratings other shows would kill for.



LITTLE GEM: Verne Troyer looks a good bet to win the latest Celebrity Big Brother series

It looks like it's going to take a miracle to stop the diminutive Austin Powers Mini-Me, Verne Troyer, from cosying up to the winner's publicity, such is the level of competition he's facing.

A member of a boy-band who were never that big the first time around, a faded rapper and Ulrika Jonsson, now more famous for copping off with Sven Goran Eriksson than, er, reading the weather.

Even among those people who care about Big Brother, the buzz has long since vanished, and fingers crossed, Channel 4 will drop the reality show standard-bearer after the end of the next series proper, which will start in earnest this summer.

We can only hope.

YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)

A **FITNESS** regimen comes to a satisfying conclusion. You could finally reach your desired weight or gotten your cholesterol under control. Give yourself a reward. Of course, you can't afford to slack off now. You need to keep working to maintain these results.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)

YOU may feel a little sensitive about your educational background. While it's true some of your rivals have better schooling, they lack your common sense approach. Keep this in mind the next time you have to promote your agenda. A respected teacher could offer their support.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)

YOU'RE finally moving past a difficult period of seclusion when you learned a lot about your strengths and weaknesses. Use this knowledge to overcome a destructive habit. Gaining this new level of control will put you in line for a very lucrative job.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)

AN academic degree, publishing contract, or legal decision could be awarded to you. You've worked long and hard to get to this point. Revising some domestic arrangements will improve family relationships. Allocate jobs according to people's ability.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)

AN artistic project comes to fruition, and you couldn't be happier with the results. A respected expert could single you out for favourable attention. Take their words to heart, as they are utterly sincere. Pay no attention to self doubt that comes bubbling to the surface.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 21)

PAYMENT for a job done some weeks ago could finally reach you. Resist the temptation to spend it all in one shopping spree. By putting a portion toward a home purchase you'll get good value for your labour. Revisiting beliefs you held as a youngster could be illuminating.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)

A **GROUP** project finally comes to a close. Fortunately, your stellar efforts will be singled out for favourable attention. Don't be surprised if you're offered a plum position as a result of this job. Fortunately, you have plenty of experience in this realm.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21)

AT long last, you're able to move past intense public scrutiny. Take this opportunity to pursue stalled plans concerning your career. This is a rare opportunity to leave an unhealthy situation behind, for once and for all. Don't listen to people who issue all sorts of dire warnings.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)

WORRYING about the future is a waste of time. You've got to put your best foot forward and go back to work. Fortunately, there is plenty to be done. By submerging yourself at work, your fears will abate. Seize the reins of leadership with regard to a career opportunity.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)

THE results of a self-improvement programme are evident to everyone. Go ahead and treat yourself to a flattering outfit or makeover. It may be necessary to revise a retirement or college fund. Taking a more aggressive approach will help you keep pace with inflation.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)

SUBMITTING your creative efforts for review will pay off. Yes, some of your work may not be understood, but the majority of your efforts will be lauded. Let this inspire you to return to a favourite hobby from childhood. A respected family member has valuable advice.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)

A **CLOSE** relationship gives you the strength you need to venture into the unknown. Lean on a romantic partner or close colleague if your courage starts to flag. They'll give you all the encouragement you need to go back to school, fight a legal dispute, or publish a book.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

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CRYPTIC CLUES

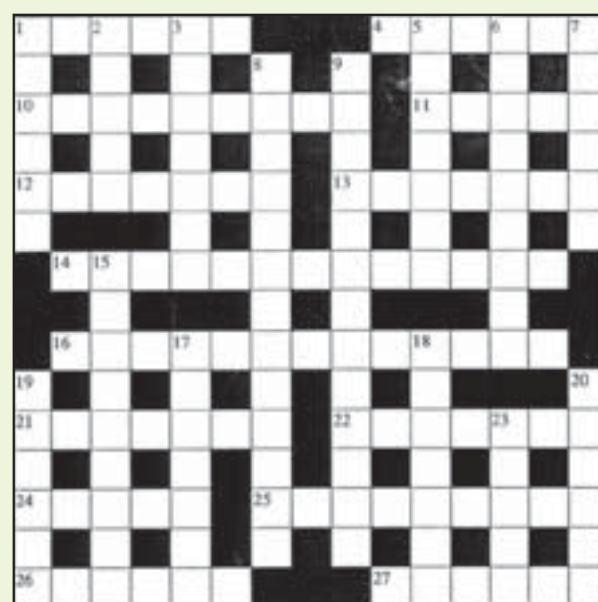
ACROSS

- 1 Lean chorister's part to fix firmly (6)
- 4 When leaving mountains small group appears (6)
- 10 Practical joke having prize share returned (5-4)
- 11 Natural ability of leading lady in exhibition (5)
- 12 Dupe saw pact disintegrate (4-3)
- 13 Civic head, he's struggling in Isle of Wight during skating exhibition (3-4)
- 14 Cancel erratic movement despite strong opposition (13)
- 16 Officer had shortened instrument used with this type of punishment (5-8)
- 21 A beginner replacing quoit of an exact divisor (7)
- 22 Royal individual with one insignia (7)
- 24 Pleased name had been included for part of the body (5)
- 25 I assume it is fertiliser inside from dinosaur! (9)
- 26 In the index empty and free from liability (6)
- 27 They leave the trip first being sprightly (6)

DOWN

- 1 Went round by a cab to head monk's office (6)
- 2 Power strike (5)
- 3 State capital games site originally (7)
- 5 Great king had a lady (7)
- 6 Tea for three dance (3-3-3)
- 7 Scattered, indefinite number of trews scattered first (6)
- 8 Know practical way to prepare starter (5,8)
- 9 Only a bit of a party! (8,5)
- 15 I created a diversion to root out (9)
- 17 Informed about crazy cup duel (5-2)
- 18 Alternatively Georgia included a New Zealand dress fabric (7)
- 19 In tartan Glen found web (6)
- 20 I got into vehicle with disheartened lady in a conceited way (6)
- 23 Left port weighed down (5)

SCRIBBLE HERE



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Obsession (6)
- 4 Out-of-date (3-3)
- 10 Translate (9)
- 11 Fashion (5)
- 12 African river (7)
- 13 Provisional (7)
- 14 Piece of gymnastic apparatus (8-5)
- 16 Aeroplanes forward thrust (3-10)
- 21 As great (anag.) (4-3)
- 22 Nuclear device (7)
- 24 Subcontinent (5)
- 25 Be a typical example (9)
- 26 Corrigenda (6)
- 27 Introduce carefully and deliberately (4,2)

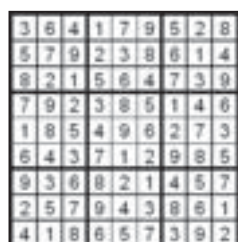
DOWN

- 1 Decorative band (6)
- 2 Carved pole (5)
- 3 Dreamlike (7)
- 5 Enclave of South Africa (7)
- 6 Magic words (3-6)
- 7 Hamlet (anag.), lady's name (6)
- 8 Raw egg with condiments (7-6)
- 9 Four musicians (6,7)
- 15 ___ the Great (9)
- 17 Colourful parade (7)
- 18 Wash hair (7)
- 19 Discard (6)
- 20 Coloured pencil (6)
- 23 Artifice (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS No69

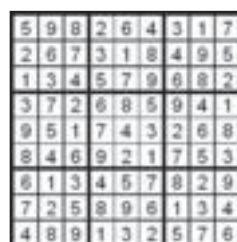
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



Answers to all of this week's quizzes can be found on our website

CRYPTIC SOLUTION No69

ACROSS: 8 Decrypted 9 Morag 10 Jobcentre 11 Cheer 12 Pulling the plug 15 Part 17 Delve 19 Zest 21 Kick in the pants 23 Nadir 24 Astronaut 26 Oxlip 27 Accessory. DOWN: 1 Recoup 2 Bracelet 3 Open mind 4 Weir 5 Smacker 6 True-blue 7 Aggregate 13 Gulch 14 Spoken for 16 Rochdale 18 Exporter 19 Zaniness 20 Disrupt 22 Squirt 25 Sock.

QUICK SOLUTION No70

ACROSS: 1 Felish 4 Old-hat 10 Interpet 11 Style 12 Zambesi 13 Interim 14 Valletting-horse 16 Jet-propulsion 21 Tear-gas 22 Reactor 24 India 25 Exemplify 26 Errata 27 Work in. DOWN: 2 Frieze 7 Hey-presto 9 String quartet 15 Alexander 17 Pageant 18 Shampoo 19 Strife 20 Crayon 23 Trick.

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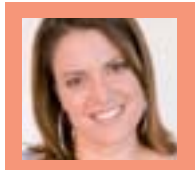
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LOOKING FOR ROMANCE? NEW PEOPLE JOIN ALL THE TIME... AND IT'S FREE!



WOMEN seeking men

YOUNG BUT NOT FOOLISH
Happy-go-lucky 19yr old brunette, blue eyes, slim, loves meeting new people, WLTm a down-to-earth male for friendship to start but hopefully something more. Box 445285 ❶

LOVELY SUSIE
Sensitive, shy and caring lady, 20, loves life and sunsets, beaches, country walks, romantic meals, cinema, WLTm handsome gent to find love with. Box 446323

SINGLE DAD WANTED
Single mum, 23, nice and curvy, 5ft6, blonde, blue eyes, likes shopping, cinema and animals, WLTm an honest and trustworthy male, 28-38. Box 446929 ❶

SOCCER FAN SEEKS SOULMATE
Fun to be with blonde female, 25, 5ft2, loves football(!), going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man to be my soulmate. Box 446494 ❶

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MAYBE MORE
Seeking fun, friendship, maybe more. WLTm fun man 25-30. I'm female, 26, brown hair/blue eyes, average build. Box 445622 ❶

DON'T HOLD BACK
Hi, I'm Rebecca, 26, 5ft6, single mum, into film, music, meeting friends and family, looking for a man to share life with. Box 447794 ❶

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
Lovely female, 26, 5ft2, brown hair, green eyes, size 10, single mum, enjoys most things, seeks genuine, laid-back guy, for fun, friendship and more. Box 428555 ❶

SMILES
Hi I'm 27, redhead, 5ft1, blue eyes, intelligent, open-minded, caring, loves going out, music, good meals, seeking friendship and snuggles with caring, understanding gent. Box 446786 ❶

HOLD MY HAND
Single mum, 28, looking for LTR. I enjoy cosy nights in, dancing, dining out. I'm 5ft1, short hair, blue eyes. Box 445363 ❶

A GOOD HEART THESE DAYS...
Tall, attractive, good hearted African female, 28yr old, enjoys films, good food and cuddles, wltm a white male for friendship and romance. Box 441654 ❶

NO TIMEWASTERS!
Easygoing female, 32, enjoys shopping, football, eating out, seeks night in, WLTm loving, caring while male 35-47 for long term loving relationship. Box 444214 ❶

HORSES FOR COURSE...
Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5'2", blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013 ❶

CHATHAM UP!
Pretty black female, 32, tall, loves watching football, shopping, travel, seeking tall, white, loving male, 34-47, for LTR. Chatham. Box 437778 ❶

FUN-LOVING FEMALE
Attractive, 31, 5'4", size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, wltm intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for a happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734 ❶

CANTERBURY TALE
Single mum of 2, 32, WLTm someone kind, caring and considerate for nights in/out and cinema. Ryan from Whitstable, please call again, leave contact details! Box 406670 ❶

SOUND GOOD?
I'm 35, kind, caring, N/S, enjoy cooking, cinema, music, dining in and out, looking for special someone to enjoy a relationship with. Box 447595 ❶

CLOSE ENCOUNTER
Loving, caring, tactile female, 36, 5'8", blonde hair, blue-eyes, n/s, GSOH, likes cinema, bowling, country pubs, nights in/out, seeks male for friendship and LTR. Box 827619 ❶

FRIENDSHIP, MAYBE MORE
Social, genuine, honest, single mum, 36, 5ft6. I've got hazel eyes and dark hair, enjoy the cinema, meals out, WLTm sincere, attractive, genuine male. Box 446840 ❶

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE
Good looking woman, 37, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, 2 kids. Looking for new friends, and hopefully someone special. Box 446039 ❶

ANIMAL LOVER?
Nurse, 37yrs, 2 kids, 5ft8, blonde hair, blue eyes, likes the gym, cooking, swimming, salsa dancing, looking for kind, caring, loyal male Box 431557 ❶

HAPPINESS, THE GREATEST GIFT
Shy female, 40, 5ft9, blue eyes, short blonde hair, medium build, loves going out, wine and dining, holidays; seeking likewise gentleman to be happy with. Box 445763 ❶

NO TIES
Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTm slim, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573 ❶

TOO MUCH TO ASK?
Genuine female, 41, 5'3", brunette, brown eyes, medium build, enjoys meals out, music etc, seeks male, 38-42, for romance. Box 155275 ❶

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE
Hello, I'm Nikki, 41yr young, 5ft1, enjoys dining out, cinema and dancing, seeking a male for friendship, possible romance and fun times. Box 444796 ❶

THE HOME LIFE
Happy, caring female, homely, tactile and honest. I'm black African, 41, 5ft2, medium build, and would like LTR with the right person. Box 446024 ❶

YOU'LL SMILE IF YOU DIAL
Bubbly 40yr old female, enjoys beaches, pubs, clubs, with a like-minded, caring male to share fun times with. Box 435102 ❶

PASSION FOR YOU
Medium build woman, 41, 5ft2, kind, caring, loving and tactile, GSOH, looking to meet a nice man for a LTR. Box 446890 ❶

TRY ME
Ashford based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring, and loving man. I have 2 kids, and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446985 ❶

SEIZE THE DAY
Lovely female, 36, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, seeks genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666 ❶

MEND A BROKEN HEART
Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasters! Box 908053 ❶

DON'T PASS ME BY
Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old. Kent based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 897983 ❶

FROM ME TO YOU
Tall leggy brunette, 38, recently bereaved, enjoy meals out or nights in, dry white wine, a good movie & cuddles, seeking a male for companionship. Box 887404

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DON'T LET ME DOWN
Pretty, black female, 38, 5ft4, like football, socialising and cooking, looking for a loving and caring male, 38-42, for a LTR. Box 446684 ❶

ENTHUSIASM ENCOURAGED!
Lovely pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5ft5, lots of energy! likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724 ❶

YOUNG-AT-HEART
Attractive 38yr old female, dark brown hair, blue eyes, curvy physique, likes days out, music, concerts, cinema, walking, cycling, seeks loving, fun male, for friendship/relationship. Box 901893 ❶

FUN AND ROMANCE
Attractive woman, 41, 5ft6, blonde hair/blue eyes. I'd like to meet a guy for romance and fun, I enjoy cinema, pubs, meals out. Box 447009 ❶

BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY
Caring lovely lady, 42, genuine, short brown hair, lacks confidence! seeking loyal, genuine person, someone special to let the spark back into my life. Box 885761 ❶

COUNTRY LASS
Country-loving happy lady, 42, green eyes, long curly hair, good figure, looking for a genuine guy for a serious relationship and happy moments. Box 883723 ❶

LET'S CLICK
WLTm a nice guy with a similar nature: I'm an outgoing woman, 42, with brown hair and green eyes. Tell me about you! Box 446847 ❶

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS
Laid-back single mum, very bubbly, outgoing and intelligent, 43, enjoys social life, drinks, meals, cinema; looking to start afresh with someone new, easygoing, life-loving. Box 446102 ❶

YOU NEVER KNOW
Kind, loving and caring mum, 43, 5ft5, round but cuddly! Just looking for someone to share my life with...how about you? Box 446457 ❶

FAST LOVE
Single lady, 43, likes gardening, eating out, cinema, music and more, seeking male for friendship and maybe more. Box 446891 ❶

MISS JULIE
Bubbly blonde, 44, stupid and like having a laugh, good company, friendship, would like to meet new friends for hopeful love... Box 888162 ❶

DEAL OR NO DEAL? (IN DEAL)
Deal-based lady, 43, divorced, brunette, green eyes, 5ft10, likes going out, pubs, clubs, cinema, shopping, walks, loves films and all sports except cricket. Box 430384 ❶

GENUINE REPLIES ONLY
Bubbly female, 44, brunette, n/s, medium/large build, enjoys singing and theatre. Would love to meet a decent fun-loving guy, similar age, pref non-smoker for LTR. Box 445955 ❶

HERE WE ARE
Easygoing female, 45, self-employed hairdresser, likes theatre, restaurants, socialising, sofa cuddles, seeking loyal, loving, caring male for good times and more. Box 444672 ❶

SOULMATE SOUGHT
African descent female, 45, 5ft6, full figure, radiant, happy, attractive, loves music, theatre, travel, the arts, WLTm gentleman who is cultured, kind, solvent and fun. Box 443998 ❶

MAKE ME LAUGH!
Fun extrovert person, 45, likes cinema, fun, going out, meals, socialising, 5ft7, dark brown hair/eyes, curvy, seeking nice guy to start off as friends with. Box 442905 ❶

INTERESTED? GIVE ME A CALL
Homely traditional lady, 44, 5ft8, slim-medium build, non smoker, love life, animals, my dog, walks along the harbour, country pubs, WLTm similar gent for romance... Box 446277 ❶

COULD IT BE YOU?
Hi I'm 44, slim, 5ft8, a redhead, love nights out, socialising, looking for friendship initially and hopefully more later on. Box 889800 ❶

ATTRACTIVE, LIVELY & YOUNG AT HEART
Affectionate tactile bubbly woman, young 56, 5'7", blonde, curvy, looking for lasting relationship with 50-58 year old loving man. Ian please leave a contact number. Box 888680 ❶

FANCY A DANCE?
Flirtatious, adventurous, energetic lady, mid 50s, 5ft3, loves all dancing, walks, dogs and films, seeks inspiring lady for fun evenings, socialising and pampering. Hailsham. Box 884172 ❶

SOMETHING NEW
Caring female with GSOH, 58, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, likes beach walks, theatre, holidays and music; WLTm male with GSOH, genuine, for friendship, maybe more. Eastbourne. Box 447682 ❶

I HAVE A DREAM
Blonde, bubbly curvy female, 59, looks younger, fun to be with, honest, seeks caring male to be my soul-mate. GSOH. Box 883891 ❶

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BUBBLY
Brunette, 45, 5ft3, blue eyes, size 18, likes socialising and nights in, looking for a nice, honest and caring gent to share good times with. Box 447642 ❶

THE REAL THING
46yr old Princess looking for loving, romantic, walking, eating in/out, WLTm a caring and considerate male to stay in with on a cold winter's evening. Box 445123 ❶

IT'S WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT!
44yr old female, blonde hair, 5ft5, slim, easygoing, enjoy many things in life, looking for someone similar out there to enjoy life with! Box 436810 ❶

ARE YOU THE ONE FOR ME?
Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, loyal man 42-52 for love and TLC. Seaford. Box 444366 ❶

BE MY FRIEND AND LOVER
Bubbly, caring lady, 47, divorced with 2 teenagers, dark hair, medium build, into cooking, driving, love to talk, laugh and have fun, seeking a normal guy Box 425952 ❶

LAUGHTER, THE BEST MEDICINE
Help me write my stand-up comedy routine! I'm 49, you'll need to make me laugh out loud and understand observational comedy to make the grade. Box 892640 ❶

JUST IMAGINE
Petite, brunette, bubbly, friendly, easygoing single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things, WLTm genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 893562 ❶

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WHERE R U?
Cheerful, honest, popular blonde, 50yrs old, 5ft2, slim build, looking to find an honest, loyal man. Ian please call again/leave contact details. Box 887347

YOU DON'T KNOW UNTIL YOU CALL...
Young looking, hard working 53yr old living in East Sussex. I am a happy, caring person with a good sense of humour. Non-smoker. Heathfield. Box 883410 ❶

SEEING THROUGH THE SHYNESS
Attractive female, 53, intelligent, kind, funny, non-smoking, WLTm nice, kind, normal male, 50-60, for theatre, laughs and more. Box 446363

ENJOY LIFE
55yr old woman, brown hair/blue eyes, 5ft2. I'm divorced with a grown up family. I enjoy reading, travel, cinema, music, eating out. WLTm caring, attractive man. Box 446798 ❶

ATTRACTIVE, LIVELY & YOUNG AT HEART
Affectionate tactile bubbly woman, young 56, 5'7", blonde, curvy, looking for lasting relationship with 50-58 year old loving man. Ian please leave a contact number. Box 888680 ❶

FANCY A DANCE?
Flirtatious, adventurous, energetic lady, mid 50s, 5ft3, loves all dancing, walks, dogs and films, seeks inspiring lady for fun evenings, socialising and pampering. Hailsham. Box 884172 ❶

SOMETHING NEW
Caring female with GSOH, 58, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, likes beach walks, theatre, holidays and music; WLTm male with GSOH, genuine, for friendship, maybe more. Eastbourne. Box 447682 ❶

I HAVE A DREAM
Blonde, bubbly curvy female, 59, looks younger, fun to be with, honest, seeks caring male to be my soul-mate. GSOH. Box 883891 ❶

MUSIC TO MY EARS
Hi my name's Christine, 57, 5'9", slim build, wear glasses, likes live music, theatre, playing darts, looking for slim build male, for friendship, possible more. Box 419914 ❶

CUDDLE UP
Medium-built lady, 62, 5ft3, likes dancing, walking, eating in/out, WLTm a caring and considerate male to stay in with on a cold winter's evening. Box 445123 ❶

SMART MOVES
Easygoing, normal bloke, 37, 6'1", looking for good company, friendship and maybe more, with nice lady, 33-37. Sheerness. Box 273530 ❶

JUST A SIMPLE CALL
Outgoing, down-to-earth male, 38, seeks similar female, for friendship, maybe more. Box 400374 ❶

MAKE IT A LOVELY DAY
Hi, I'm Carl, 40, GSOH, 6ft, light green eyes, brown hair, looking for a fun, bubbly woman to share laughs, days out and much more. Box 436896 ❶

SEARCHING FOR LOVE
Genuine single fella, 41, worked hard all my life now need to find love, seeking loving lady to have loads of fun and more with. Box 884098 ❶

EASYGOING
Bubbly black male, 42, cheerful, friendly and kind, likes music, football and theatre, WLTm a pear shaped female for friendship and more. Box 447661 ❶

HONEST AND LOYAL
42yr old guy, new in town, 5ft8, muscular build, been hurt in past, looking for someone similar to move on in life with. Hastings. Box 446668 ❶

ROB THE BUILDER
Medium build lad, 43, olive skin, looking for a genuine lady to spend the good and the bad times with. Box 447658 ❶

CALL ME IF YOU DARE!
Easy-going guy, 44, from Kent, likes football, restaurants, pubs and motor racing, looking for a like-minded woman to socialise and share good times with. Box 883446 ❶

I'LL MAKE YOU LAUGH
Very romantic, caring and loyal male, 44, slim, blue eyes, fair hair, great SOH, seeks female, 24-48, with similar interests for helpful LTR. Hastings. Box 446120 ❶

DAD'S THE WORD
Lonely single male, 44, 6ft2, fair hair, GSOH, quite happy but looking for a lady, 30-60, to have fun with, hopefully something else. Box 446452 ❶

DON'T FORGET THIS ONE!
Hi, I'm Steve, 40's, 6ft2, muscular build, likes pubs/clubs and sport, WLTm a female, 40-46, for an everlasting relationship. Box 445541 ❶

DOWN TO MARGATE
Young-looking, slim male, 43yr old, 5ft10, enjoys beach walks and cinema, wltm a mature lady for committed LTR. Margate. Box 441706 ❶

COOKING UP SOME LOVE
Homeside Indian male, 30, a restaurant owner, seeks female to find companionship with and end loneliness. Box 883458 ❶

READ THIS!
Good looking male, 31, from north Kent, looking for a fun relationship with an up-beat female. I enjoy sport, cooking, walks and holidays abroad. Box 883584 ❶

NEW ON THE SCENE
Hi I'm Pete, 31, hard working, 6ft, dark hair, blue eyes, honest, sincere, looking for fun, friendship and more. Box 881680 ❶

YOU NEVER KNOW
A little bit shy 33yr old man, slim, n/s, professional, loves meeting new people, music, films, swimming, walking. Looking for an active woman with gsoh. Box 447820 ❶

NON-SMOKING
Separated male, 37, 6ft, slim, good looks, N/S, gsoh, kind, caring, sensual, likes keeping fit, movies, nights in/out; seeks caring, slim, active female for LTR. Box 445729 ❶

YOUR TIME IS COMING
Maidstone male, 35, dark blond hair, dark eyes, nice looking, have 1 little girl, own business, varied interests, looking for a fun lady, under 40 Box 429375 ❶

R U 4 ME?
Down-to-earth, loyal guy, 36, looking for companionship, leading to a long-term relationship. Enjoys meals out, good company, conversation, cosy evenings in. Box 914917 ❶

HAPPINESS IS...
Good-looking male, 36, short spiky brown hair, likes dancing, socialising, films, wltm nice, loyal, honest female, 30-42, for a relationship. Maidstone. Box 401597 ❶

SOLVENT
Smartly dressed male, 37, self-employed, seeks female, with good personality, for fun and relationship. Box 181734 ❶

BROWSE and listen line: 0906 753 3093
(Calls cost 75p/min; contact your service provider for details)
HELP required with service? 0871 220 9205
(Live assistance, 2pm-5.30pm, Mon to Fri | Email: louise@g8wawe.co.uk | Calls cost 1.0p/min; contact your service provider for details)

IN IT FOR THE LONG RUN
I'm Neil, 49, looking for a dog-loving lady, 40-60, who's single of course, I love music and cinema. I'm definitely looking for a lasting relationship. Box 447770 ❶

TACTILE, FUNNY AND LOYAL
Dave, 48, tall, slim, brown hair, clean and tidy, loves being in love, looking for a feminine, funny and feisty female for friendship and more. Box 887784 ❶

CRAZY, HAPPY, DEVOTED IN LOVE
Young male, active, 52, enjoys socialising, mixing with people, chatting, having fun, cooking, music, theatre, travel, seeking like-minded female for love and happiness. Box 444404 ❶

WHO KNOWS?
Unattached attractive man, 53, average height and shape, brown eyes and dark hair, WLTm unattached lady to share life and laughter with. Box 883649 ❶

BOOGIE NIGHTS
Old-fashioned, traditional male, loyal, honest, 56, 5ft10, grown-up kids, likes the coast, country walks, car racing, various music, dining in/out. Box 431482 ❶

WARMTH & TENDERNESS
Caring, tactile, creative professional man, 56, slim, 6ft, seeks a slim attractive intelligent woman with a youthful approach to life for warm and tender times. Box 888954 ❶

ADRENALIN RUSH
Tactile medium build homebuilder, 56, 6ft, blue eyes, GSOH, likes diving, swimming, funfairs, cooking; WLTm similar female for helpful LTR and TLC! Box 447675 ❶

NICE TO MEET YOU
Tall, slim, non-smoking male, Kent area. I'm 58, and enjoy playing the piano, walking, eating out. WLTm nice, non-smoking lady with similar interests. Box 446794 ❶

BE MINE?
Property developer, 62, travelled Europe and beyond, eclectic interests, romantic, sensitive, seeks attractive and intelligent female friend, confidante, travelling companion, soulmate. Box 892490 ❶

YOU MUST LOVE DOGS!
Romantic male, 67yr young, n/s, WLTm a romantic, slim and petite lady, 60-65, to share loving and committed relationship. Box 447630 ❶

Men seeking men

ADVENTURE & FUN GUARANTEED

Fit, young male, 41, 6ft, blond, green eyes, good build, likes keeping fit, nights out/in, seeking female, 25-40, 6ft+, well-built. Box 447316 ❶

SIMILAR TASTES
Looking for like minded male, I'm a 42yr old guy, 5ft11, green eyes, short dark hair, medium build. I'm into music, films, theatre, sport. Box 444465 ❶

JOINED IN LOVE?
Good, down-to-earth guy, 46, green eyes, dark hair, slim, enjoys holidays, music, pubs, eating in, seeking male for a male 35-50 for companionship. Box 441106 ❶

THE GOOD TIMES
61yr old easy-going guy, likes reading, the outdoors, keeping fit, looking for a similar, with a positive outlook in life. Ian please leave contact details. Box 428136 ❶

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PROPERTY NEWS

HIPs get set to expand with more safety data

CONTROVERSIAL Home Information Packs are to face further changes this year as the Government increases the information which needs to be provided.

A new property information questionnaire will be included with flood risk information, gas and electricity safety, service charges, structural damage and parking arrangements.

From April 6, HIPs must also be provided on the first day of marketing a home – and not after 28 days, as current regulations stand.

The Government claims the changes will place no further burden on estate agents and the packs have not caused a slowdown in the housing market.

New green belt worries in push for development

A ROW has erupted over plans for a dramatic shake-up of the Government's rural planning policy.

Reports suggest that villages across England will come under threat as policy is changed to allow the Government to deliver on its pledge to build 3 million homes by 2020.

And the crunch issue will be giving landowners and farmers incentives to sell land for development – fuelling fears that the erosion of greenbelt land will no longer be seen as an important issue.

Housing Secretary Margaret Beckett is tipped to announce the reforms later this month, but they have already been criticised by countryside protection groups.

Don't be so quick to repossess, urges boffin

HOLDING back repossessions is critical for the health of the UK property market, according to a leading expert in the field.

Speaking at the launch of the UK Housing Review 2008/09, Steve Wilcox from the University of York explained that mortgage rescue plans from the Government were important but holding back repossessions was needed.

"Forbearance is far more critical than mortgage rescue," Professor Wilcox said.

"If there is a flood of repossessions, this will depress the property market further and put off recovery even longer."



SHORTLISTED: Marriott, based in Ashford, has had its spirits raised by gaining recognition as the only local agent to be listed for a prestigious market award

Boost in difficult times for nominated agency

■ BY CHRIS MURPHY

AN independent Ashford estate agent has shown it can stay up with the big boys in the industry after being short-listed for a major award.

Marriott was the only Ashford agent on the list at the 2008 Estate Agency of the Year Awards held at the QEII Conference Centre in London.

The category for Best Small Agency in the South East is one of the most fiercely contested.

Despite missing out on the award, the company said this achievement had served to increase its pride and raise spirits even higher ready to take on this year's challenging marketplace.

The area covered extends as far west as Buckinghamshire, excluding London, as far north as Cambridgeshire, and down to the south coast.

Sales director Julie-Anne Marriott said: "The panel of judges recognised customer service levels from voluntary testimonials and the results of the independent OEA survey, which is the Ombudsman for Estate Agents."

She said the firm consistently achieves over 90 per cent of all agreed sales leading to successful completions, against a local average of around 50 per cent.

She said: "With the current economic conditions it is absolutely vital to choose an estate agent wisely. All too often vendors will be seduced by an inflated valuation or the lowest fee – the two least important factors in selecting the right agent."

"The most important factor when selling or letting your most valuable asset should be selecting the agent who will always act in your best interest."

She said agents do not control market conditions, and points out it is buyers who currently dictate market prices.

Miss Marriott said: "However, a good agent will give sound practical advice of the current market. This advice should be backed up with documented evidence of comparable 'sold/for sale/to let' prices."

"When arriving at a marketing price it is advisable to take an average of three independent valuations."

"If a property is offered to the market incorrectly priced, the likelihood of securing a buyer is extremely slim. By accepting incorrect advice the vendor is unlikely to sell. Therefore instructing the cheapest agent can undoubtedly be costly."

She said much better advice would be to choose a recommended agent: "Many of the world's property experts advocate this and it works. Why? Because it's true."

JULIE MADDOCKS IS GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THE BOOM AREA OF KINGS HILL IN WEST MALLING @ propertyforkent.co.uk

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Willesborough £335,000

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Willesborough £225,000

Four bedroom detached executive home, double garage, conservatory and garden.

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Willesborough £220,000

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Willesborough £175,000

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Washford Farm £175,000

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Willesborough £174,995

Three bedroom semi detached house, two reception rooms, cloakroom/utility room.

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Kingsnorth OIEO £160,000

Three bedroom end of terrace. ORP. Two garages. Countryside views.

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Lydd OIEO £154,000

Three bedroom extended semi detached house. Two reception rooms. Rear garden.

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Willesborough £150,000

Three bedroom end of terrace townhouse, cloakroom, garage, no chain.

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Willesborough OIEO £140,000

Three bedroom terrace house, lounge/diner, gas fire central heating, double glazing.

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Three bedroom terrace. Original fireplaces. No chain. 100ft + Rear Garden.

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Ashford £114,995

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Willesborough £112,500

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Kennington £90,000

Two bedroom 1st floor apartment. Garage & parking. Woodland garden. No chain.

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Woodchurch OIEO £68,000

Two bedroom detached park home. Garage & parking. Woodland garden. No chain.

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STANHOPE OIEO £120,000

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KINGSNORTH £129,950

Two bedroom mid terrace house. Entrance hall, modern kitchen, lounge/diner, kitchen and modern white bathroom. Allocated parking for two cars and enclosed rear garden.

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HIGHFIELD £129,950

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SOUTH ASHFORD £130,000

Two bedroom terrace house. Two reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, upstairs bathroom and rear garden measuring 60ft. Near to International station.

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SOUTH ASHFORD OIEO £140,000

Three bedroom end of terrace. Two reception rooms, kitchen, cloakroom, bathroom, off road parking and 22ft garage.

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SINGLETON FARM £145,000

Three bedroom semi detached house. Two reception rooms, bathroom, kitchen/breakfast room, garage & driveway. Planning permission for two storey extension.

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Three bedroom terrace house. Lounge/diner, kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden, front garden in excess of 40ft. No Chain.

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NO CHAIN Three bedroom period end of terrace property with loft room. Lounge/diner, kitchen, downstairs bathroom, and 150' rear garden.

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Two bedroom semi detached house in village location with no onward chain. Entrance hall, two reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, family bathroom. Garden measuring 50ft.

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Four bedroom detached house. Ground floor cloakroom, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility, en suite shower room, bathroom. Landscaped rear garden, garage and driveway parking.

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TENTERDEN £249,950

Three bedroom detached house in village location. GF cloakroom, two reception rooms, kitchen, utility, en suite shower room & bathroom. Integral garage & driveway for 4/5 cars.

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KINGSNORTH OIEO £250,000

Four bedroom detached period house in rural location. Two reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, ground floor shower room, first floor bathroom. Double garage and driveway.

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PARK FARM OIEO £265,000

Four bedroom detached house set on a substantial plot. Three reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, utility, two en suites and family bathroom. Double integral garage, driveway.

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Two bedroom detached bungalow in enviable position near to village centre. 130' x 50' rear garden, lounge, kitchen, cloakroom & family bathroom. Period outbuilding in garden. Garage & driveway.

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Four bedroom detached split-level bungalow. Ball Lane area. Two receptions, kitchen, bathroom and en suite. Garage and driveway parking for several vehicles.

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WOODCHURCH OIEO £400,000

Four bedroom executive detached with entrance hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, en suite to master and family bathroom. Double detached garage, gas central heating and double glazing.

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Five bedroom Victorian semi detached house. Two reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen & bathroom, utility. Off road parking to rear for 2/3 vehicles.

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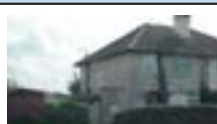


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SINGLETON**OIEO £230,000**

4 bedroom detached house. Downstairs WC, 2 reception rooms, conservatory, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, en suite to master.

WILLESBOROUGH LEES**OIEO £275,000**

5 bedroom detached house. 3 reception rooms, kitchen, 2 en suites, family room, detached garage, garage, driveway parking.

KENNINGTON**£279,950**

4 bedroom detached house. 3 reception rooms, ground floor cloakroom, utility room, two en suites, double garage.



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CREDIT CRUNCH LEADS YOUR MOVE LETTING AGENTS TO BE FIRST TO OFFER INSURANCE POLICY DIRECT TO TENANTS

In response to consumer concerns about the credit crunch, and the increasing number of people who are choosing to rent property rather than buy, Your Move, which has an office in Ashford, has announced that it is to be the first UK letting agent to specifically offer tenants an insurance policy which protects them against the financial impact of losing their job through redundancy, sickness or accident.

Your Move, one of the UKs leading letting agents, believes that many would-be buyers are now turning to the rental market because they are finding it harder to get a mortgage. This, according to their data, has seen a 65% rise in demand for rented accommodation between August 2007 and August 2008 alone. And, it's because of this that they now have a policy available with tenants in mind appreciating the fact that, although they aren't homeowners, they could still face significant financial hardship, should they lose their job.

Steve Cannon of Your Move Lettings in Ashford commented:

"It's quite common for homeowners to take out insurance policies that protect their mortgage payments, for example, should they suddenly become ill, have an accident or lose their job but it's something many tenants simply don't think about because they don't have a mortgage. Worryingly, however, if they did lose their job they would still be expected to pay their rent and landlords would be within their rights to eventually evict them if they didn't. Yet we're not sure that tenants have thought about this."

"As a result we're actively promoting an Accident, Sickness and Unemployment Policy to tenants – we're the first letting agent to do it but feel, with the increasing number of people choosing to rent rather than buy, that it's our responsibility to do so."

"It's important for me to know that, not only is my investment protected, but also that my tenants are suitable"

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EAL1360 10/2008

"Tenants can receive, for example, an income of £600 a month for one year by paying a premium of just £22 a month – that's less than £6 a week. And, of course, they can choose the amount of benefit and the length or time they receive it for – so it could be even cheaper."

"And, that's not all, we have also arranged for the cover to include a helpline where a tenant, or any member of the family that lives with them, can gain advice and guidance about finding another job if they have been made unemployed. The advice includes, for example, how to fill in application forms or how to create a CV. We can even offer advice on interview techniques. Basically we don't just want to provide an income, we want to offer support as well."

If you'd like to find out more about ASU Cover from Your Move or to gain a free, no obligation quote, simply contact Joanne Lee-Wharton on 01233 645588.

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MOTORS NEWS



Peugeot mega sale at Robins & Day dealers

BRITAIN'S biggest Peugeot dealer group, Robins & Day, is staging a huge New Year sale of delivery mileage '58 plate cars.

Amongst deals at Kent sites – Canterbury, Maidstone and Rochester – is the limited edition Peugeot Monaco 207 (from £8,995 and pictured) exclusive to Robins & Day. The three/five-door Monaco comes with stitched leather seats, air con and remote control CD player and discounts of more than £2,000.

There are other deals on many models, with savings of up to £6,412.



Fiesta sparks a strong 2008 finish for Ford

STRONG consumer demand for Ford's renewed product line-up has further boosted the UK number one brand's market share.

The company finished 2008 strongly with 16.7 per cent of the December market – up from December 2007's 15.8 per cent – with the new generation Ford Fiesta ousting the bigger Ford Focus as Britain's favourite car.

But the Focus retained its crown as UK's best-seller for a 10th successive year while Ford also grew its market share marginally by 15.1 per cent against 2007.



Seat 'Revolution' now spreading to finance

SEAT has followed up on its Revolution discounts campaign by offering credit crunch busting finance deals and Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) plans for cash-strapped motorists.

These include zero per cent HP deals on specific three and five-door Ibiza superminis (pictured) as well as certain used cars at dealerships.

The deals follow offers that deliver higher spec packages and savings of up to £5,110 against rivals and discounts of up to £2,000 off Seat's own list prices.



ONE TOUGH CUSTOMER: The second generation Terios continues where the old car left off, with a hardy and rugged character that belies its modest cost and a high driving position

Rugged Terios offers cheap 4x4 for users in 'real world'

THERE is a suspicion that people who buy budget 4x4s are more likely to use the off-road ability than more numerous image-conscious owners of big 'Chelsea Tractor' models.

And their lighter weight, combined with decent ground clearance, means that rugged baby off-roaders can sometimes embarrass bigger rivals. On the other hand, a short and narrow wheelbase combined with rugged off-roading suspension can translate into bouncy and noisy on-road performance – very much the weakness of the original Terios.

Fortunately, the second generation model is more well-rounded, even if the start price leapt from the previous car's sub-ten grand figure to £12,725, though it does carry Daihatsu's now standard five-year unlimited mileage warranty plus, for a limited period, five years/45,000 miles' free servicing.

I'm not sure the sole engine option, a 1.5-litre 103bhp petrol unit, is the complete answer; it might be lively and have the potential to average nearly 40mpg, but a diesel

ROAD TEST DAIHATSU TERIOS

■ BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

would deliver better economy and the low down lugging power that rougher conditions require, plus a cheaper road tax bill than the £170/year for the cheapest Terios model.

However, even in petrol form, this second generation Terios continues where the old car left off, with a hardy and rugged character that belies its modest cost, high driving position, a turning circle able to shame a supermini and a body still shorter than a VW Golf.

But where the old car was absurdly crude on-road, the new Terios is far more refined.

In many ways it has become the car the original RAV4 was before Toyota boosted its money-spinning compact SUV (sports utility vehicle) upmarket, except that it has retained off-roading ability in preference to the deft handling of the RAV.

Fixtures and fittings for the Terios are also much improved, with a well-arranged dashboard and standard kit including air con, reverse parking sensors, electric mirrors, electric windows front and rear and remote central locking.

For those who really do need a proper 4x4 on the cheap, the Terios looks like it has slugged its way to the top of the hill.



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08 Reg Mazda3 1.4 S 5dr	£7,390	£11,568	£4,178
08 Reg Mazda3 2.0d Sport 5dr	£12,990	£16,624	£3,634
58 Reg Mazda5 2.0d Sport 5dr	£14,290	£16,624	£2,334
07 Reg Mazda6 2.0 TS2 [147] 5dr	£8,590	£17,930	£9,340
57 Reg Mazda CX-7 2.3T 5dr	£15,190	£24,448	£9,258
08 Reg Mazda MX-5 1.8i [Option Pack]	£11,849	£16,203	£4,354
08 Reg Mazda MX-5 2.0i [Option Pack]	£12,499	£17,181	£4,682

Peugeots

	OUR PRICE	WAS NEW	YOU SAVE
08 Reg Peugeot 207 1.4 VTi S [95] 5dr	£7,790	£12,013	£4,223
07 Reg Peugeot 207 1.6 VTi SE [120] 5dr	£8,490	£12,622	£4,132
08 Reg Peugeot 207 1.6 HDi 90 S 5dr	£9,990	£13,039	£3,049
08 Reg Peugeot 308 1.6 VTi Sport 5dr	£10,490	£15,390	£4,900
57 Reg Peugeot 308 1.6 HDi 110 Sport	£10,990	£17,445	£6,455
08 Reg Peugeot 308 1.6 HDi 110 SE 5dr	£12,490	£18,423	£5,933
08 Reg Peugeot 308 2.0 HDi GT 5dr	£13,590	£20,186	£6,596
57 Reg Peugeot 407 2.0 HDi 136 SE 5dr	£10,190	£18,455	£8,265

Renaults

	OUR PRICE	WAS NEW	YOU SAVE
58 Reg Renault Twingo 1.2 TCE GT 3dr	£6,999	£10,157	£3,158
07 Reg Renault Clio 1.4 16V Dynamique	£7,290	£10,437	£3,147
08 Reg Renault Clio 1.5 dCi Dynamique 3dr	£8,990	£12,201	£3,211
08 Reg Renault Grand Modus 1.6 5dr Auto	£8,090	£13,158	£5,068
08 Reg Renault Megane 2.0 Renaultsport 225	£12,890	£19,195	£6,305
08 Reg Renault Laguna 2.0 dCi Dynamique 5dr	£12,490	£17,229	£4,739
08 Reg Renault Laguna 2.0 dCi 180 GT 5dr	£14,290	£21,438	£7,148
58 Reg Renault Koleos 2.0 dCi Privilege 5dr	£20,390	£23,367	£2,977

Other Makes

	OUR PRICE	WAS NEW	YOU SAVE
07 Reg Citroen C3 1.6 HDi 16V Exclusive 5dr	£6,799	£13,032	£6,233
07 Reg Ford Fiesta 1.25 Style 3dr (Climate)	£5,999	£9,622	£3,623
57 Reg Ford Focus 1.6 Zetec 5dr (Climate) 5dr	£8,499	£15,045	£6,546
57 Reg Ford Mondeo 1.8 TDCi Edge 5dr	£9,750	£16,795	£7,045
57 Reg Vauxhall Astra 1.8i VVT Elite 5dr	£8,299	£17,015	£8,716
07 Reg Vauxhall Corsa 1.2i 16V Life 3dr	£6,599	£9,497	£2,898
07 Reg Vauxhall Vectra 1.8i VVT Exclusiv 5dr	£6,990	£14,897	£7,907
57 Reg Vauxhall Zafira 1.9 CDTi Design	£11,999	£21,705	£9,706



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**08 Reg Mazda
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**08 Reg Peugeot
308 1.6 HDi 110 S 5dr**

New Price £15794

**AutoPlanet Price
£10290**

Saving against new £5504



**58 Reg Renault
Clio 1.2 TCE Expression 3dr**

New Price £11495

**AutoPlanet Price
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Saving against new £3775



**57 Reg Renault
Laguna 2.0 dCi 150 Dynamique Auto**

New Price £19970

**AutoPlanet Price
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Saving against new £7280



**07 Reg Vauxhall
Vectra 1.8i VVT Llife 5dr**

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**08 Reg Mazda
Mazda3 2.0 Sport 4dr**

New Price £16624

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£11990**

Saving against new £4634



**08 Reg Peugeot
207 1.4 16v Sport 3dr**

New Price £12160

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**57 Reg Peugeot
4007 2.2 HDi GT 5dr**

New Price £25864

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Saving against new £8874



**58 Reg Renault
Megane 1.6 VVT Dynamique 5dr**

New Price £15967

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Saving against new £5968



**57 Reg Fiat
Grande Punto 1.2 Active 5dr**

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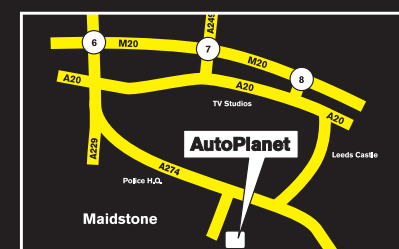
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Ref: CFE/o8/o652

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Ref: CFE/o8/o650

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To apply visit www.kent.gov.uk, email recruitment.line@kent.gov.uk, or telephone 08458 247 904 or minicom 08458 247 905 (charged at local rate). Please quote relevant reference number.

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Using your experience of community or project development, you will help to deliver this funding to local agriculture, forestry and rural communities.

You will work with individuals, businesses, community groups and other organisations to develop ideas into well-constructed projects that address issues in the Local Development Strategy. Along with appraising projects for funding, you will also facilitate networking and skills acquisition to help deliver them.

You'll need a good knowledge of the land-based sector or rural development issues, coupled with outstanding interpersonal and communication skills and an excellent understanding of project development and partnership working. Ref: ER/o8/o157

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Closing date 31st January 2009

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If you would like to discuss this post further, please contact Sue Hamilton, Service Manager KCA Thanet on 01843 298355 ex. 217 or Christine Gordon Admin Lead on 01795 590795 ex. 2.

Closing date: Friday 23 January 2009.
Interview date: Thursday 5 February 2009 (TBC).

Application forms and job descriptions can be downloaded from <http://www.kca.org.uk/pages/vacancies.html> or email recruitment@kca.org.uk

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Picture: REX FEATURES



OPINION: Shane Warne says Rob Key should be captain

Spin king says Key should have got England job

LEGENDARY Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne feels the England and Wales Cricket Board should have installed Kent's Rob Key as England skipper, rather than Andrew Strauss.

The Kent captain was once again linked with the hottest job in world cricket following a sensational week in which Kevin Pietersen jumped before he was pushed and coach Peter Moores was sacked.

Warne, never short of a view or two, wrote in his Times column that he felt the appointment of Strauss was the safe bet and he

CRICKET

instead thought Key should have got the job.

He said: "My choice – if KP really had to go – would have been Rob Key of Kent. I think Key is unlucky not to have played more for England and I would have put him in charge for all three formats.

"He has flair and imagination, a good temperament and is well liked within the game."

The 29-year-old Kent skipper, who was a 25/1 shot for the Test job, is adept at all

forms of the game – leading Kent to the finals of both the Friends Provident Trophy and the Twenty20 last season.

He was also believed to be in the running for the role as one-day and Twenty20 skipper before the ECB plumped again for Strauss and although Key said he would have jumped at the chance to captain his country, he was never awaiting a call.

He said: "I would definitely have taken it of course, I would never turn something like that down. I didn't think I would get it and I wouldn't have put any money on me."

Guernsey project is still on the table

THE people behind the project to bring a team from Guernsey into the Kent League remain confident of joining in time for next season.

The recently renamed Guernsey Athletics FC are looking to raise a six-figure sum in sponsorship before the end of March to get approval from the Football Association. They would then be able to apply to join the Premier Division for the 2009/10 season.

James Blower, a member of Guernsey Athletics' board of directors, has come up with an idea to make it possible for Kent teams to travel. He said: "The model we're looking at is to run it on a fully costed basis, so we would cover the expenses of the Kent teams once they get to Gatwick."

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Watch Kent's premier ice hockey side take on the Cardiff Dragons

Farewell to creator of UK racketball

TRIBUTES have poured in from all over the world following the death of Ian Wright, the creator of racketball in the UK.

The 74-year-old suffered a suspected heart attack on court at his beloved club in Bexley last weekend.

It brought a sudden end to a much-loved figure, well known across Kent, who devoted his life to squash, racketball and tennis. Wright occupied a staggering number of positions across a variety of sports, from club level all the way up to the European Squash Federation, where he was secretary for almost 20 years.

PLEASE SEND YOUR SPORTS STORIES TO SPORTS EDITOR GLENN PEARSON AT glenn.pearson@kosmedia.co.uk



ENGLAND CALLING?: Simon Willis (right) could step into Graham Ford's shoes (left) at Kent if the South African takes up the position of England's head coach

Is Willis the man to step into Ford's shoes at Kent?

CRICKET

■ BY GLENN PEARSON

any of it for his own ego.

"I don't know what would happen if Fordy was to go, it would certainly be a massive blow.

"As players we are trying to get in the England team and it's the same for coaches, we all want to be moving up the ladder and it's the same for them. It's no different for Simon Willis. Obviously things are pretty tight at Kent at the moment and that will dictate a lot of what goes on at the club for the next two years."

Lure

Ford, who joined Kent in 2005 having previously coached Natal and later South Africa, has already turned down India and New Zealand to stay at Canterbury but the lure of coaching England – especially in a year that includes the

Ashes and the Twenty20 World Cup – could be too difficult to turn down.

Willis has worked under Ford as first-team coach for the four seasons he has been at Kent and can understand why he has been courted by international sides.

"It has got to be his record," he said. "Anyone that has ever worked with him knows that he is a top class individual. He is not a tea cup thrower but manages to get his message across so that players know where they stand."

When asked whether he would want the director of cricket role at St Lawrence if Ford were to be lured away, Willis, who did the job in 2004, responded cautiously.

"To be fair I was thrown in at the deep end in my first year and that was quite interesting but I think we will have to wait and see what develops," he said. "Fordy has to be offered the opportunity and then it's a case of whether he takes it or not. There's a lot of water to flow under the bridge yet."

Picture: ADY KERRY

Barham ready to swing into action for Abu Dhabi

GOLF

BY TOM HOWARD

BECOMING a father during the winter may have changed Benn Barham's priorities but the golfer is determined to qualify for the lucrative \$10m Dubai World Championship later this year.

The Ashford golfer will begin his European Tour season tomorrow by competing in the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship. Last season was disappointing for Barham after finishing 110th on the Order of Merit – a full 21 positions down on his 2007 season.

Despite his worst Tour season finish for four years, the 33-year-old will take heart from recording his best ever Tour event finish of third place at the Russian Open in July last year.

With the European Tour introducing the money-spinning Dubai World Championship featuring the top 60 players on the Tour for 2009, Barham is gearing up for a push to qualify for the tournament in November.

He said: "I suppose my priorities have changed since becoming a father, but for me this season is all about the race to Dubai. I obviously want to win a tournament, but to finish in the top 60 and to take part in the Dubai event is definitely a target. I don't real-



Picture ADY KERRY

DETERMINED: Benn Barham begins his quest to qualify for the Dubai World Championship in Abu Dhabi this week

ly see it as a crunch year for myself as I feel I have ten to 15 years left in me on the European Tour.

"Abu Dhabi is a great place to start, it's a fantastic venue. There is no doubt it will be a tough event and a strong field to go up against."

Even though the arrival of his daughter has taken up the majority of his winter, Barham has been practising hard and believes the

break from competition will give him renewed drive for 2009.

He said: "The preparations have been good, but it will be tough to start playing competitive golf again after having two months off. It has been lovely to have a break after playing a lot of golf and to welcome my daughter into the world. It has been an exciting two months off and it will be hard to leave my family for three weeks when the Tour begins again."

LEAGUE TABLE

(Not including midweek games)

RYMAN DIVISION ONE SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Kingstonian	21	13	5	3	+26	44
2 Metropolitan Police	23	11	9	3	+15	42
3 Cray Wanderers	24	12	5	7	+15	41
4 Sittingbourne	22	12	4	6	+6	40
5 Fleet Town	22	10	9	3	+18	39
6 Ashford Town	24	10	9	5	+17	39
7 Dulwich Hamlet (-3)	24	11	7	6	+13	37
8 Worthing	20	10	7	3	+11	37
9 Walton & Hersham	23	10a	7	6	+6	37
10 Godalming Town	23	10	6	7	+14	36
11 Merstham	22	9	7	6	+2	34
12 Eastbourne Town	24	9	5	10	+2	32
13 Folkestone Invicta	23	8	8	7	+1	32
14 Croydon Athletic	23	7	6	10	-4	27
15 Whyteleafe	23	7	4	12	-8	25
16 Leatherhead	21	7	4	10	-14	25
17 Burgess Hill Town	22	6	6	10	-4	24
18 Corinthian-Casuals	24	4	8	12	-21	20
19 Chipstead	23	4	8	11	-24	20
20 Whitstable Town	23	6	2	15	-25	20
21 Walton Casuals	23	4	5	14	-19	17
22 Crowboro Athletic	23	3	3	17	-27	12

FIXTURES (Saturday): Ryman Division One South: Ashford

Town v Burgess Hill Town

Lovell insists none of his players will be leaving

FOOTBALL

AFTER watching his side win in their last six outings, Ashford Town boss Steve Lovell knows his players will attract the attention of rival clubs, but insists his squad will be staying together.

Town have climbed the league to sixth after recording five consecutive wins in December. The run has warranted Lovell the honour of manager of the month, which he dedicated to his squad.

With teams looking to add to their squads for an end of season push, Lovell, however has indicated his players are not for sale.

He said: "The run we have been on will attract clubs to my players, but I do not intend to let anybody go before the end of the season. All the players are on contract so if anyone wants to purchase them they will have to contact the club and go through the right channels. I'm sure clubs will be looking, but I have not heard of any approaches yet."

Lovell, who was in the market for a striker two months ago, has rubbished rumours linking him with Folkestone striker Jimmy Dryden, who handed in a transfer request last week.

He added: "I will not be putting in an approach at the moment. I am happy with my squad and we have four forwards already at the club so it would be hard to replace someone."

Town hope to be back in action this Saturday when they host Burgess Hill Town. With no injury worries, Lovell should have a fully fit squad of 18 players to choose from.



Picture ICKNAPCO

NOT FOR SALE: Ashford boss Steve Lovell intends to keep hold of his squad for the remainder of the season

FENCING



CALL UP: Gemma Phipps will represent Great Britain for the first time this Sunday in the U15s team

Representing Great Britain is très bon for young fencing star

YOUNG fencing star Gemma Phipps has been called up to represent Great Britain under-15s for an international match against France on Sunday.

The 12-year-old fencer from Ashford, ranked eighth in the country for her age, only began the sport two years ago and has already been recognised nationally. Phipps, who trained at MX Fencing Club in East Malling, near Maidstone, now faces her biggest challenge in her short career.

After just one year of competitive action she will join the Great Britain team on Sunday, which will consist of 30 members who hope to beat France in the competition held at Monetau near Auxerre.

The competition will be her biggest to date and she hopes to bring her 'A' game to the table to continue her rise up the rankings.

Her father Robert Phipps was just as shocked as his daughter by the announcement and revealed she almost missed out on the opportunity to represent her country.

He said: "We were quite shocked when we found out she had been selected for the Great Britain squad considering she has only been fencing for two years and only one year competitively.

"She almost missed out on it completely as she received an email about the competition, but didn't realise she had been selected. It was only when another parent phoned me and told me that she was selected that we knew.

"She was over the moon and extremely excited when she realised she made the team so we are all looking forward to it."

January will be a busy period for Phipps as she will be in action in the British Youth Championships on January 24, after qualifying for the competition by picking up a silver medal in the regional event last November.

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